

REDEMPTION REDEEMED:

A Puritan Defense of Unlimited Atonement



JOHN GOODWIN

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A Puritan
Defense of
Unlimited
Atonement

**REDEMPTION
REDEEMED.**

Wherein the Most Glorious
Work of the

REDEMPTION

Of the World by *Jesus
Christ*, is by Expressness
of Scripture,

clearness of Argument,
countenance of the best
Authority, as well Ancient
as Modern, Vindicated and
Asserted in the Just
Latitude and Extent of it,
according to the Counsel
and most Gracious
Intentions of God, against
the incroachments of later
times made upon it,
whereby the unsearchable

Riches and Glory of the
Grace of GOD therein, have
been, and yet are, much
obscured, and hid from the
eyes of many.

Together with a sober,
plain, and through
Discussion of the great
Questions relating
hereunto, as viz.
concerning

**ELECTION AND
REPROBATION,**

The Sufficiency, and
Efficacy of the Means
vouchsafed unto Men by
GOD, to Repent and

The Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and thy two Friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Job 42:7.

LONDON,
Printed by *John Macock*,
for *Lodowick Lloyd* and
Henry Cripps, and are to
be sold at their shop in
Popes bead Alley, near
Lumbard street M.DC.LI,

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in the second part of this
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TO THE
REV. DR. BENJAMIN
WHICHCOTE,
PROVOST OF KING'S
COLLEGE, AND
VICE-CHANCELLOR OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE;
TOGETHER WITH THE
REST OF THE
HEADS OF COLLEGES
AND STUDENTS IN
DIVINITY
IN THAT FAMOUS

UNIVERSITY.

REVEREND and right worthy Gentlemen, Friends, and Brethren in Christ, how either yourselves or others will interpret this Dedication, I am, I confess, no such seer as to be able to foresee; and were the foresight hereof to be bought, I should strain myself very little to make the purchase. I have the witness within me, whose prerogative it is to laugh all jealousies and suggestions of men to scorn, which rise up in opposition to his testimony, clearly assuring

rudiments of his heavenly art of drawing light out of darkness, for mine own use, I have not been for so many years together trampled upon to so little purpose, as to remain yet either ignorant or insensible of mine own vileness, and what element I am nearest allied unto; or so tender and querulous as either to complain of the weight of those who still “go over me as the stones in the street,” or to project the sufferings of others in order to my own solace and relief. My long deprivation and want of respects from men

is now turned to an athletic habit, somewhat after the manner of those who by long fasting lose their appetites, and withal, either contract or find an ability or contentedness of nature to live with little or no meat afterwards. I can, (Philip. 4:13,) from the dunghill whereon I sit, with much contentment and sufficient enjoyment of myself, behold my brethren on thrones round about me.

The prize, then, that I run for in my dedicatory applications unto you is, by the opportunity and

advantage hereof, to excite, provoke, and engage, and this, if it may be, beyond and above all reasonableness of pretence to decline the service, those whom I judged the most able, and not the least willing among their brethren, to bless the world, labouring and turmoiling itself under its own vanity and folly, by bringing forth the glorious Creator and ever-blessed Redeemer of it out of their pavilions of darkness into a clear and perfect light, to be beheld, revered, and adored in all their glory; to

men, unless they shall, by a serious and solemn act of consecration, be consigned over unto, and interested in, that great service of God and men whereby that blessed union between them shall be promoted and advanced, the foundations whereof have been by so high an hand of grace laid in the blood of Jesus Christ. You know the saying of the great Prophet of the world,—“He that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad,” Matt. 12:30. Whatsoever shall not suffer, yea, and offer itself to be taken and

carried along by and with
Jesus Christ, in that grand
and sublime motion
wherein he moveth daily,
according to the counsel of
his Father, in a straight
course for the saving of the
world, will most certainly
be dissipated and shattered
all to nothing, by the
irresistible dint and force
thereof; how much more
that which shall stand in
his way, obstruct, and
oppose him in this his
motion! Especially gifts,
parts, reason,
understanding in men,
improved and raised, or
under means and

endowments, and worthy abilities of learning and knowledge, shall give their strength in this kind to other studies, contemplations, and inquiries, suffering, in the mean time, the minds and consciences of men to corrupt, putrify, and perish in their sad pollutions through that ignorance, or, which is worse, those disloyal and profane notions and conceptions of God and of Christ which reign, or rather indeed rage, in the midst of them, without taking any compassion on them, by

who, by suffering their reasons and judgments to be abused either by sloth and supine oscitancy, or else by sinister and carnal respects otherwise (for there is a far different consideration of those who miscarry at this point, through a mere nescience or human infirmity) bring forth a strange God and a strange Christ unto the world, such as neither the Scriptures, nor reason unbewitched, know or own, and this under the name of the true God indeed, and of the true Christ; yea, and most importunately and

retain God in their knowledge,” &c., ver. 28, or, (as the original, I humbly conceive, would rather bear,) “as they did not make trial,” *i. e.* put themselves to it, engage their abilities, “to have God in acknowledgment,” *i, e.* so to discover him to the world, that he might be acknowledged in his sovereign greatness and transcendent excellences by men. From which passages laid together, it clearly appears, 1. That for men that “know God,” or have means and opportunities of knowing

him, not to “glorify him” like himself, and “as God,” is a sin of a very high provocation, and which directly, and with a swift course, tends to an utter dissolution of all communion and friendly converse between God and men. 2. That for men of knowledge, parts, and abilities, to neglect the manifestation and making known of God, in and to the world, to the intent that he may be “acknowledged,” revered, loved, delighted in by his creature, is a strain of the worst resentment with God of

debates with all tenderness
and circumspection,
arguing nothing,
concluding nothing but
either from the
grammatical sense or best
known signification of
words and phrases in the
Scripture, and this, for the
most part, if not constantly,
in conjunction both with
the scope of places, the
express consent and
agreement of contexts,
together with the analogy
of the Scriptures
themselves in other places,
or else from the most
unquestionable and
universally received

principles and maxims either in religion or sound reason, and more particularly from such notions concerning the nature of God, and his attributes and perfections, which I find generally subscribed with the names and pens of all that are called orthodox amongst us, and have written of such things. Nor have I anywhere receded from the more general sense of interpreters in the explication of any text or passage of Scripture, but only where either the express signification of

words, or the vergency (or rather, indeed, urgency) of the context, or some repugnancy to the expressness of Scripture elsewhere, or else some pregnant inconsistency with some clear principle either of religion, or sound reason, necessitated me unto it. Yea, I seldom upon any of these accounts leave the common road of interpreters, but I find that some or other, one or more, of the most intelligent of them have trodden the same path before me. And for the most part Chrysostom, among the

myself (I speak as in the presence of God) of any the least mistake, either in word or meaning, of any author or testimony cited by me throughout the whole discourse, nor yet of any omission in point of diligence or care for the prevention of all mistakes in either kind.

The discourse, such as it is, with all respects of honour and love, I present unto you; not requiring anything from you by way of countenance or approbation, otherwise than upon those equitable terms on which Augustus

Notwithstanding, I judge it much more, of the two, richly conducing to the dear interest of my peace and safety, to be delivered from my errors, than to receive countenance and approbation from men in what I hold or teach according to the truth.

If nothing which is here pleaded, whether from the Scriptures or otherwise, shall be able to overrule your judgments into an acknowledgment of truth in the main doctrine contended for, in which case you will, I trust, though not with respect to

unmoveable, though many handfuls of the lighter and looser earth about the sides of it, should be taken up and scattered into the air like dust. In like manner, the main body of a discourse may stand entire in its solidity, weight, and strength, though many particular expressions, sayings, and reasonings therein, that are more circumferential, and remote from the centre, should be detected either of inconsiderateness, weakness, or un-truth. Yea, in some cases, one argument or plea may be so

time, should have been somewhat better secured. But I trust that ancient law of indulgence in such cases as mine (which very probably may be some of your own also) is of authority sufficient in your commonwealth to relieve me:

On him that sits long at work, sleep, without disparagement may creep.

Neither need I suspect or fear any of that unmanlike learning amongst you, which teacheth men to

defamation of them with themselves. I have somewhere observed, that this method of confuting and suppressing opinions, against which men have had no competent grounds of eviction otherwise, was at first invented by the subtle sons of the synagogue of Rome; and elsewhere shown, by several instances, that it is familiarly practised by them.

The truth is, that you have no such temptation upon you, as particular and private men have, to flee to any such polluted

1:7. I can look upon you with an eye of good hope, as a generation of men anointed by God with a spirit of wisdom, knowledge, zeal, and faithfulness, to bring on the new heavens and the new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell; and this by repairing the breaches and decayed places in the body of the doctrine of Christian religion, which, since the first raising and completing of it by Christ and his apostles, partly through the ignorance and insufficiency, partly

notion, is commonly taught and held forth amongst us, will hardly be able to say, This is the doctrine of Christ. For whosoever shall engage himself with that diligence, thoroughness, and impartialness of inquiry which become those who run for so high a prize as an incorruptible crown of glory, to consider what is ordinarily delivered and more generally received amongst us, not only in and about those great points of election, reprobation, redemption, the efficacy and extent of the grace of God, and

perseverance of the saints;
but also about many other
heads of Christian doctrine,
as about faith, justification,
the sufferings of Christ, the
intercession of Christ,
repentance, good works,
baptism, the state and
condition of the dead until
the resurrection, with
sundry more, and shall,
with like diligence,
consider what the
Scriptures teach
concerning these
particulars respectively,
will clearly and distinctly
see, that though Christ be
not so ill formed amongst
us in some of these

doctrines as he is in others, yet he is represented very unlike, and much beneath himself, in them all. So that as Joshua, though he performed the part of a valiant captain, and made a worthy progress in the conquest of the land of Canaan before his death, yet left a very considerable portion of the work to be achieved by others after him, Judges 1:1—9, &c.; in like manner Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, with others, who laboured with much honour and success in the work of reformation, and reduced the body of

spoiling the corn in the midst of it.

Brethren, my pen hath transgressed the line and law of my intentions. These confined me to a much narrower compass in my epistle, and prohibited me the troubling of you to any such degree as now I have done. The truth is, my affections to you interposed, and occasioned the transgression. Love is bountiful; and, I trust, will as naturally produce pardon on your side as it hath brought forth such a transgression on mine. In all this address I have

desired nothing of you, little or much, upon mine own account, save only so far as your ingenuous and worthy deportment in the particulars offered, together with the unspeakable benefit and blessing which you shall bring upon the world thereby, will be matter of joy and high contentment unto me. Envy me not my “rejoicing with the truth,” though herein I should be found equal to the greatest of you,—it is the best of my portion in the world. I shall discharge you from any further sufferings from my

pen at present, only with my soul poured out before the great God and Father of lights, in prayer for you, that he will make his face to shine upon you, in quickening your apprehensions, enlarging your understandings, balancing your judgments, strengthening your memories, in giving you ableness of body, willingness of mind, to labour in those rich mines of truth, the Scriptures, in breaking up before you the fountains of those great depths of spiritual light and heavenly understanding, in

prophets respectively in the
glory and great things of
the world to come.

Your poor brother in
Christ,

Always ready in love to
serve the meanest of you;

JOHN GOODWIN.

FROM MY STUDY IN
COLEMAN-STREET,
LONDON, FEB. 22, 1659.

PREFACE.

GOOD READER,

THE account of my
application unto thee in

sharp engagement upon me, to search more narrowly and thoroughly than formerly I had done, into the controversies agitated in the subsequent discourse, was a pamphlet published by a young man about five or six years since, under the title of “A Vindication of Free Grace,” &c., which, though libellous enough, and full of broad untruths, yet the face of it being fiercely set against me and my doctrine, it was lifted up well nigh as near unto the heavens as Herod’s oration, Acts 12:22, by the applause of

charge, respectively, might more satisfactorily, and with more advantage to the peace and comfort of men, be discoursed in a just and entire treatise, I accordingly changed my intentions of publishing the said answer into a resolution of declaring and asserting my judgment about the doctrinal imputations specified and managed therein against me more at large. This resolution continuing with me, seconded and strengthened with further light shining into my heart daily from the Father of

exercise and engagement of thy mind and thoughts.

This, I presume, I should do effectually, if I were able, in the first place, to possess thee thoroughly with a true notion of the danger of error and misapprehension in the things of God; secondly, with the deep and solemn necessity which lieth upon all persons of mankind without exception, who are endued with reason and understanding, to engage these worthy and noble faculties to their uttermost, about the things of God and matters of salvation; and

lastly, with the innocence and inoffensiveness of the doctrines maintained in the present discourse, in respect of those vulgar imputations which, by way of prejudice, are laid to their charge. And these things I shall endeavour, within the narrowest compass of words, wherein it is lightly possible for matters of so great consequence to be transacted to any purpose, in the remainder of this epistle.

For the first: truth, especially in things of a supernatural concernment,

and blessedness of men,
contriving and distilling
himself into a notion or
impression apt and likely to
be entertained and
admitted by the
understanding, under the
appearance, and in the
name of truth, into union
with itself, and by means
hereof, into union also with
the heart and soul of men.
Much in such a sense as
that wherein the apostle
affirmeth “Meats to be for
the belly, and the belly
again for meats,” 1 Cor.
6:13, is truth for the
understanding, and the
understanding for truth.

the belly unto them, than the understanding of a man is, when invested, enriched, filled with supernatural and Divine truth; and whilst the knowledge and due consideration hereof there abideth, as far as the influence and sphere of the activeness of it extend, the heart, soul, and affections of men also are hereby enriched and filled with their appropriate treasures of righteousness, holiness, joy, and peace. Whereas error, and all mis-notions of God, his nature, attributes, counsels, or ways, though the mind and

and occasioneth sinful distempers, unholy and unworthy dispositions, to put forth here. The truth is, that error is the great troubler of the world; it is that fountain of death that issueth and sendeth out all those bitter waters, and streams of sin and unrighteousness in every kind, which overflow the earth almost in every place and part of it, making it so extremely barren of comfort and peace, as it is, yea and as the shadow of death, to the inhabitants of it. Why do men so universally walk in ways of

creature, man. The woman had a right and sound persuasion of the just severity and truth of God in his threatenings, until Satan prevailed with her to change it for a lie, Gen. 3:4, 5; into the spirit of which he Adam himself also was presently baptized by her confidence under it. Neither could the devil have touched either the one or the other of them, but by the mediation of some erroneous notion or other concerning God. And as Satan brought sin into the world by the opportunity of a misrepresentation of God

unto his creature; so when God shall please to reform the world, and make a perfect ejection of sin out of it, he will do it by repairing the breaches which Satan hath made upon the judgments and understandings of men, with a clear light of the knowledge of himself. Well may the Holy Ghost call sin and wickedness in every kind the works of darkness, because they are never practised, hut by the illegal warrant and blind direction of some false persuasion or other in the minds of men. Upon this account also it is,

malignity in every error) disposeth the soul which drinks it in, and converseth with it, to a spiritual death, being destructive to that communion with God, wherein principally the life, *i. e.* the strength, peace, joy, and happiness of the soul consisteth. For God, in whatsoever he revealeth, or speaketh in his Word, of any inconsistency with an error (and error there is none about spiritual things, in opposition whereunto God speaketh not more or less in his Word) must needs be as a barbarian, or one that speaketh with an

unknown tongue, to him whose mind and understanding is distempered with it. When our Saviour told his disciples, (in words express and plain enough,) that “the Son of man should be delivered into the hands of men,” Luke 9:44, and 18:34, it is said, that “they,” notwithstanding, “understood not the saying.” The reason plainly was, because they were erroneously principled about the subject of which Christ spake, which was his estate of humiliation by suffering death ; they

supposing and taking it for granted, that he was to be a great potentate and monarch in the world, without passing through the valley of an ignominious death thereunto. In like manner when he said to Joseph and the virgin his mother, “Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” Luke 2:49, the text saith, “they understood not the saying that he spake unto them.” The reason of their non-understanding in this case was because they were under the command of such a supposition, which

thwarted that principle, according to the exigency whereof he so spake. They supposed that he was under no engagement, in no due capacity, at least at those years, which at this time he had attained, to manage the great affairs of God and his kingdom in the world: whereas his sense was, that he was under the one, and in the other; and spake accordingly unto them. So also the reason why Festus supposed “Paul to be beside himself, and that much learning had made him mad,” Acts 26:24, (implying that he could

make neither sap nor sense of what he had said,) was because the tenor and substance of Paul's discourse was diametrically opposite to his principles. After the same manner, when and whilst a man's judgment is perverted by any unsound opinion that hath taken fast hold on it, he is incapable of all that light of truth which God shineth in the Scriptures in opposition to that error, and must, of necessity, either relinquish this opinion, or else, either deprave and misunderstand the mind of

also, in case they be entangled with error otherwise, by means hereof suffer loss to a very sad degree in the things of their present peace. "When the sun is in the greatest eclipse that is lightly incident to it, there yet shineth so much light to the world which is sufficient to make it day, and whereby to perform ordinary works wont to be done in the day time: notwithstanding during such an eclipse as this, the world, through want of that fulness of light which that worthy creature, the sun, naturally

affordeth, suffereth many degrees of the damp and sadness of the night. In like manner, though the light of God's countenance may shine in the face of the soul to such a degree as to make a day of grace and favourable acceptance with him, notwithstanding the interposition of a dark cloud of many errors: yet most certain it is that according to the compass and proportion of such a cloud, and during the interposition of it, the soul will be apt to suffer now and then many grudgings and sad impressions of a

compassion, in case their ignorance, or error, be not affectate, and such, from the entanglement and pollution whereof they had competent means to have delivered themselves.

[Epiphany] The apostle maketh it a worthy character of an “High Priest taken from amongst men, to be able to have *compassion on the ignorant*, and such as are out of the way,” Heb. 5:2. There are but two things that can make the condition of a creature miserable, sin and sufferings; and both these

are the unquestionable fruits or productions of error. Lusts and sinful distempers can be nowhere engendered, but only in the dark regions of the soul: the shining of the light of the truth is as the shadow of death unto them. Nor can fear that hath torment, nor any afflicting or sad impression upon the spirits of men, climb up into the bed of the soul, to disturb the rest and sweet peace of it, but only in the night of ignorance, and by the opportunity of error lodging there. The light of the knowledge of the truth

as it is in Jesus, is unto fears, agonies, and all perplexity of spirit, like unto Solomon's King sitting upon his throne of judgment, in reference to wicked men, whom he scattereth or chaseth away with his eyes, Prov. 20:8.

“The truth,” saith Christ unto the Jews, meaning, when known by them, “shall make you free,” John 8:32. All bondage and servility, whether under sin or under sorrow, is dissolved by the clear shining of the light of the knowledge of God into the heart and soul: whereas the

darkness of error
strengtheneth the hand of
the oppressors, and binds
fast the iron yoke of
servitude upon the necks of
those that are in bondage.
The time would fail me to
speak at large of all the sad
retinue of evils and
mischiefs that attend upon
error. Take in brief the
sum, as well of what I have
said, as what I would
willingly say yet further,
upon this account.

First, It hath been said,
that error defileth and
imbaseth the person who
coupleth his judgment with
it.

Secondly, That it obstructeth communion with God, as far as the malignity of the influence of it extendeth.

Thirdly, That the proper and direct tendency of it, is unto death, to bring everlasting destruction upon the soul.

Fourthly, It hath been shown, that error is the proper element for jim and ojim, and doleful creatures; I mean, for fears, sad apprehensions, disconsolate thoughts, on the one hand, and so for wild satyrs, lusts, sensual, and sinful distempers on

the other hand, to be engendered and bred, as also to live and subsist, to move, and act, and take their pastime in; the knowledge of the truth being mortal unto both. I now add,

Fifthly, That error disposeth the soul to apostasy from the gospel, and to a recidivation or falling back into the devouring sin of unbelief. This it doth not only by giving opportunity and encouragement unto lusts, and inordinate affections in the soul, the motions and actings of which are to the

the ointment of the gospel, will, as he should have sufficient cause to do, were his imagination in this case sufficiently grounded, conclude, that certainly it came not from God, but from men. No man's heart or conscience will serve him to reverence that, as coming from God, wherein he savours the least weakness, error, or untruth.

Sixthly, Though an error seems to be merely speculative, and in respect of the frame and constitution of it, to have no affinity or

understandings, with that which aboundeth (upon such a temptation) in their wills and affections, I mean with passion and with unworthy and reproachful vilifications, either of the persons of their adversaries, for not concurring in judgment with them, or of their arguments, which they are not able in a rational, sober, or Christian way to answer.

Seventhly, (that which is of some affinity with the former particular,) Error in sensu composite, and whilst a man is resolved to

stand by it, subjecteth him to this hard and miserable necessity, either to profess himself wilful in the holding of it, as not being able to give any reason or account unto others why he holdeth it; or else to rise up in his might to resist and oppose the mind and truth of God in all those passages of Scripture, (with arguments built thereon,) which shall be pertinently alleged and insisted upon to detect the vanity and falsehood of his opinion. Of what sad consequence, either the one or the other of these are like to prove,

reader, it is referred to thy serious and Christian thoughts to consider.

Eighthly, He that is a servant in his judgment and conscience unto error, is, during this his servile condition, utterly incapable of that rich and sweet privilege of perfect and entire union with the saints, which the Lord Christ a little before his death so earnestly solicited his Father, that all that believe in him might be invested with and partake. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me

through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” And again, “That they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one,” &c. John 17:20, 21, &c. Suppose all the saints at this day alive upon the face of the earth, should accord and be one in judgment about any error, though otherwise their accord should be most entire, as well in affection as in all spiritual and Divine truth, yet this would not amount

that there is an universal conspiracy amongst the saints against Christ, in that very error which cleaveth to our judgments under the name and appearance of truth, (which is a case of the highest unlikelihood that lightly can be supposed,) we are incapable, during the continuance of the said error in us, of a thorough and perfect accord with the saints, even in that wherein they are one, in and with Christ himself. Yea in case we shall seek union with the saints by soliciting and persuading them to come

to the souls of men upon any such terms, that he that lives and dies in any of them must needs perish. No; as the apostle, speaking of the stars of heaven, saith, that “One star differeth from another star in glory,” 1 Cor. 15:41, so is it true amongst errors, one error differeth from another in shame and in danger. Nevertheless, as all distempers, sicknesses, and diseases in the body, are of one and the same inclination and tendency, the faces of them all are set towards the death and dissolution thereof, though

come actually to destroy either the peace or life of these souls, being either timeously discovered by men, and so cut off from their judgments, or otherwise balanced and corrected by worthy and rich principles of evangelical truth, that the presence of them doth not much influence or annoy the soul.

Ninthly, another soul-calamity occasioned by error, is, there being such concatenations and mutual involutions of errors, one within another, a man cannot be engaged in

uncouth notion, that God accepted the persons of the children of the Jews, though unbelievers, and rejects the persons of the children of believers under the gospel, from the same or the like grace, these being under no greater guilt or demerit than those other. 4. That baptism succeedeth not in the place, office, or service of circumcision. 5. That when the initiatory sacrament was more grievous and burthensome, in the letter of it, God ordered the application of it unto children; but after he made

a change of it for that which is more gracious, and much more accommodate to the tenderness and weakness of children, as baptism clearly is, in respect of circumcision, he hath wholly excluded children from it. 6. That it was better and more edifying unto men under the law, to receive the pledge of God's fatherly love and care over them, whilst they were yet children; and that now it is worse, or less edifying to men, to receive it at the same time, and better and more edifying unto them to receive it afterwards, as,

Christianity to have many errors to maintain, and many rotten opinions to build up, is the next way to bring him to a morsel of bread, not only in his name and reputation amongst intelligent men, but also in the goodness of his heart and conscience towards God. Nor is it of much more desirable an interpretation, for such a man to appear distracted in his principles, or divided in himself.

Tenthly, and lastly, error is in this respect also of very sad portendance unto men, viz. because being once entered within the

doors of a man's judgment, it commonly bewitcheth the person with such an adulterous affection towards itself, that his foot is very hardly recoverable out of the snare. There is no error but at one turn or other, either directly or indirectly, gratifieth the flesh, or that which remains of the old man in men. Now the flesh in all men is very loath to part with any of her benefactors; to be despoiled of any principle, which speaks to her heart in any matter of ease, pleasure, honour, profit, or the like. Upon this

account it cometh to pass, that error is so readily, and sometimes even greedily, entertained, and with so much difficulty, and conflicting with the judgments and consciences of men, cast out. “None,” saith Solomon, speaking of the harlot, “that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life,” Prov. ii. 19. They are not many, who having once turned aside into error, return back again into the way of truth, when once they have forsaken it. Such persons commonly prove [GREEK WORD

HERE] as the philosopher speaks, *i. e.* stout and stiff in their opinions, and men that will stand fast in their conceits. And, as another expresseth their genius, they will have that to be truth which they hold, but they will not hold that which is truth. Yea, a great part of those whose judgments and consciences are enthralled under error, and this of a very sad and dangerous import, are yet so superstitiously fearful to make use of those means which God hath expressly prescribed and enjoined for their deliverance, that they

trial at all, whether it be good or no.

The premises concerning the fierce and bloody war, wherein error fights against the soul, considered, it cannot seem strange unto us, that the great lover of the peace and prosperity of souls, Jesus Christ, blessed forever, should pour out his heart and soul unto men so abundantly, as he hath done in the gospel, in cautions, admonitions, directions, threatenings, promises, almost without end, that so, by one means or other, they might be effectually prevailed with,

again: “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines,” Heb. 13:9. Elsewhere: “That we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive,” Ephes. 4:14. Again: “Let no man deceive you with vain words,” Ephes. 5:6. So, “Be not deceived,” 1 Cor. 6:9. “Beware, lest any man spoil you through philosophy, and vain deceit,” &c. Coloss. 2:8. “These things,”

saith John, “I have written unto you concerning those that deceive you,” 1 John 2:26, or seduce you, *i. e.* that endeavour to seduce or deceive you. The Lord Christ himself cautioneth his disciples, and in them others, *ex abundanti*, against false Christs and false prophets, who, as he saith, “should show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect,” Matt. 24:24. This operous and abundant interposure of the Holy Ghost, for ten times more of like

consideration might be added, in all variety of applications unto men, which are any ways conducing to the preserving of men's judgments free, and their minds pure from error, doth with a great pregnancy of conviction argue and suppose, that errors and false conceptions in matters of religion, are of a most formidable and dangerous consequence to the precious souls of men. Far he it from any man to imagine, that the Holy Ghost should, according to

the proverb, thus labour about the lifting of a feather, or be solicitous at that high rate, which hath been expressed, to prevent the lighting of a grasshopper upon the earth, where it can do little or no harm.

The second thing, good reader, wherewith I desire to possess and fill thee, judgment and conscience, heart and soul, and all that is within thee, to strengthen thy hand to a diligent perusal of the treatise ensuing, is the high necessity that lieth upon thee, as it doth upon all the

world besides respectively,
to awake, raise, and engage
all those worthy faculties
and endowments which
God hath vested in thee,
reason, judgment, memory,
understanding, about the
things of thine eternal
peace; and because this
iron, I fear, hath been of
late much blunted with the
earthly conceits and
suggestions of many, I am
desirous to put so much the
more strength to it. But to
me it is the first-born of
wonder and astonishment,
that, amongst men
professing the glorious
Gospel of Christ, who is the

separate the vile from the precious. But as the plummet and rule do not measure the work of the architect, or discover whether it be true and square or otherwise, of or by themselves, but as they are regularly applied hereunto either by the workman himself or some other capable of making such an application, for however true the work may be, a sufficient test or proof of the work cannot be made without the use of the plummet and rule about it; in like manner, though the word of God be of sovereign

with the words, agrees with the context, falls in with the scope and subject-matter in hand, is as accordable with Scripture assertion elsewhere, comports as clearly with the unquestionable principles of reason, and the like, how is it possible for me in this case to conceive or believe, especially with the certainty of faith, that my sense is the mind of God, and consequently the true sense of that place, rather than that other which hath all the same characters, symptoms, and arguments of being the mind of God

just offence judge his prince, yea, or him that is made a lawful judge over him, to be wise, just, bountiful, &c., at least when there is sufficient ground for it.

If it be yet further demanded, But is the reason or understanding of a man competent to judge of the things of God, as, for example, to determine and conclude what is the mind of God in such or such a passage of Scripture, or in such and such a case? Doth not the Scripture, speaking of men in their natural condition, call them

darkness, Ephes. 5:8, affirming likewise that “the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not,” John 1:5; and elsewhere doth it not inform us that “the natural man perceiveth” or receiveth “not the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned?” 1Cor. 2:14. And how many heathen philosophers, heretics and others, undertaking to judge of the things of God in the Gospel by the light

and strength of their own reasons and understandings, have miscarried, to the everlasting perdition of their own souls, and, as is much to be feared, of many others also? To all this I answer by degrees.

First. It is a thing as unquestionable as that the sun is up at noonday, that reason and understanding in men are competent to judge of the things of God, at least of some, yea, of many of them, or rather, indeed, of all that are contained in the Scriptures, according to the degree of

that it was now high time to compromise that great and weighty controversy, which of a long time had been depending between God and them by repentance. The apostle Paul willeth the Corinthians, in one place, to judge of what he saith, 1 Cor. 10:15; in another, he directeth that in their church meetings the prophets should speak two or three, and that the rest should *judge*, 1 Cor. 14:29. In both which places he clearly supposeth in them a competency of judicature or discerning about spiritual things. And when

in his defence before Agrippa, he demands of him, and the rest that were present, “Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?” Acts 26:8, he clearly supposeth that the resurrection itself of the dead, which yet is one of the great and deep mysteries of the gospel, was nothing but what they, consulting with the light of reason and understanding in themselves (for they were not supernaturally enlightened) might judge probable enough, and no ways unlike to be effected.

memorably worthy: “As to believe (the gospel) is the part of a raised and nobly ingenuous soul; so, on the contrary, not to believe, is the property of a soul most unreasonable, and unworthy, and depressed, or bowed down, to the sottishness of brute beasts.” Therefore,

Secondly, Whereas it was objected that men in their natural estates are by the Scriptures termed darkness, and in this respect presented as unable to comprehend the light of the gospel, I answer, There is in the controversies

adjoining, of which a touch presently) the natural man; hut quo jure, nondum liquet. And however, the whole carriage of the context round about maketh it as clear as the light (as I have elsewhere argued and proved at large) that it is not the unregenerate man, but the weak Christian, that is there spoken of and termed, as a little after, in the same contexture of discourse, he is termed, carnal, and, a babe or youngling in Christ. If therefore by the natural estate of men the objection

meaneth the unregenerate estate of men according to the whole compass and extent of it, and under all the differences which it admitteth, I absolutely deny that the Scripture anywhere termeth natural men darkness. Those Ephesians, of whom the apostle saith, they were sometime darkness, had been not only or simply unregenerate, but had walked in sins and trespasses, according to the course of this world, and after the prince that ruleth in the air, the spirit that worketh effectually in the

prepossessed with erroneous notions and conceits against Christ, and about the estate of their Messiah at his first coming unto them; whom they expecting in the form of a great monarch, rejected and crucified in the form of a servant. It was this darkness which they had through an oscitant, loose, and sensual converse with their own Scriptures, voluntarily suffered to grow and spread itself upon the face of their minds and understandings, that was a snare upon them, and occasioned the sad event

comprehend it, hut only that it did not comprehend it. Now it is a known principle in reason, that “a negatione actus, ad negationem potentiae, non valet argumentum.” There may be a defect in action, or performance, where there is no defect of power for action. And the very observation and report which the evangelist maketh of the non-comprehension of the light by the darkness in which it shone, plainly enough imports, that the defectiveness of this darkness in not

so infinitely concerned to comprehend the light, to acknowledge and own their Messiah being now come unto them, and who withal had a rich sufficiency of means to have done the one and the other, should notwithstanding be so stupid and unlike men as not to comprehend this light, not to acknowledge or own this their Messiah, is a matter of high admiration and astonishment, and the mention of it very commodious and proper for that subject of discourse, which the Holy Ghost had now in hand, as

might be showed more at large, but that I fear the reader hath already more than his burden of an epistle.

Thirdly, Concerning that scripture, 1 Cor. 2:14, “ But the natural man perceiveth not,” &c., if, reader, thou conceivest there is anything in it spoken with any intent to disable reason or understanding in man, so far as to divest them of all capacity or power for the apprehending, conceiving, or believing any of the things of God, yea, or particularly of such of the things of God the

incapacity, or such which, by a diligent use of means, he may not very possibly, and according to the ordinary course of Providence, outgrow, but only a present or actual incapacity or indisposition, which is regularly, and, as it were, of course, curable. These things I there evince from the express tenor and carnage of the context.

Fourthly and lastly, to the objection concerning heathen philosophers, heretics, and others of great parts and natural endowments of reason, wit, understanding, &c., who

either rejected the gospel as a fable, as the philosophers, or else perverted and wrested the truth thereof in many things to their own destruction, and, possibly, to the destruction of others as heretics; I answer, When I affirm and teach that reason, or the intellectual part of a man, is competent to apprehend, discern, subscribe unto, the things of God and of the gospel, my meaning is not to affirm withal that therefore men of these endowments, though ever so excellently enriched with them, must of necessity apprehend,

Nothing there is so
profitable,
But to do mischief is as
able.

Because some men suffer themselves to be bewitched with a corrupt desire of “drawing away disciples after them,” and for the fulfilling of such a lust, “speak perverse things,” Acts 20:30, as the apostle speaketh; it doth not follow from hence that therefore they were in no capacity or in no possibility of speaking the truth and

worthy and blessed design which the apostle calls the having of God in acknowledgment. Upon this their unnatural unthankfulness towards God uttering itself in their addiction of themselves to studies, speculations, and inquiries of a self-concernment, with the neglect of Him, their foolish heart was darkened. Concerning heretics, it is a common notion amongst us that these, from time to time, were turned aside from the way of truth by some unclean spirit or other, as

whatsoever any man's error or mistake in judgment is about the things of the gospel, it is not to be imputed to any deficiency on God's part in the vouchsafement of means unto him, competent and sufficient, as well for the guiding into as for the keeping of his judgment in the way of truth 5 but into some deficiency, neglect, or incogitancy of his own, which he might very possibly have prevented or overcome. But,

Secondly, Concerning the Spirit of God, by which alone, and in opposition

he cannot, with any tolerable propriety of speech, nor with truth, be said to apprehend, discern, or conceive that in one man which he doth not after the same manner apprehend, discern, and conceive in another, yea, in every man. Therefore, if there be any thing more apprehended or discerned of the things of God in one man than in another, the difference ariseth not from the different apprehensions of the Spirit in these men, but from the different apprehensions of these men themselves, and this

by their own reasons and understandings, they having, as hath been said, no other faculties, principles, or abilities wherewith to apprehend but these.

If it be demanded, But is any man able, without the presence and assistance of the Spirit of God, to discern the things of God, or to judge aright in matters of religion ? I answer,

1. Plainly and directly to the heart, I suppose, of those who make this demand, No. The Spirit of God hath such a great interest in, and glorious superintendency

sound reasonings and debates, whether for the confirmation of any truth or the confutation of any error, or the like. But,

2. Though the Spirit of God contributes by his assistance after that high manner which hath been declared, towards the right apprehending, understanding, discerning the things of God by men, yet this no ways proveth, but that they are the reasons and understandings of men themselves, that must apprehend, discern, and understand these things:

disciples, saith, “And he will show you things to come and again, “He shall receive of mine, and shall show them unto you,” John 16:13, 14, he supposeth that they (viz. with their own reasons and understandings) were to apprehend and judge of the things that should be thus shown unto them, to have been shown unto them by the Spirit of God, and not to have proceeded from any other author. Yea, in case men shall receive the things of God themselves *for* the things of God, or of the Spirit of God, before their

doth he require to be believed also. And they that believe him otherwise, believe they know not what, nor whom; and so are brethren in vanity with those that “worship they know not what,” John 4:22, and build “altars to an unknown God,” Acts 17:23. To trust, or believe in God upon such terms as these, is, being interpreted, but as the devotion of a man to an idol; yea, the apostle himself arraigns the Athenians of that high crime and misdemeanour of idolatry, upon the account of their sacrificing

to “an unknown God,” Acts 17:29.

4. and lastly, The interposure and actings of reason and understanding in men, are of that sovereign and most transcendant use, yea, necessity, in and about matters of religion, that all the agency of the Spirit notwithstanding, a man can perform nothing, no manner of service unto God with acceptation, nothing in a way of true edification to himself, without their engagement and service. First,

I stand charged by God, not

regularly reject his sense in this case, at least as an untruth, unless I apprehend some relish or taste therein which is irrational, or some notion which jarreth with or grateth upon some clear principle or other of reason within me. For as on the one hand, what doctrine or notion soever clearly accordeth, and is commensurable, with any solid and undoubted principle or ground of reason within me, is hereby demonstrably evinced to be a truth, and from God: so, on the other hand, what

doctrine or saying soever bears hard, or falls foul, upon any such principle, must of necessity be an error, and somewhat that proceeds from Satan, or from men, and not from God. The reason hereof is clearly asserted by the apostle in these words, “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace,” 1Cor. 14:33. From whence it appears that God is not divided in himself, or contradictory to himself, so as to write or assert that in one book, as in that of the Scriptures, which he denieth or opposeth in

another, as viz. in that of nature, or of the fleshly tables of the heart of man; but whatsoever he writeth or speaketh in the one, he writeth or speaketh nothing in the other but what is fairly and fully consistent with it. Upon this account it is a grave and worthy advertisement of Mr. Perkins, in his epistle before his treatise of predestination: "It is," saith he, "also requisite that this doctrine (he speaks of predestination, election, and reprobation) agree with the grounds of common reason, and of

that knowledge of God which may be obtained by the light of nature.” In this saying of his he clearly supposeth, that whatsoever should be taught by any man in the mysterious and high point of predestination, otherwise than according to the Scriptures and the truth, may be clearly disproved by this, viz. the disagreement of it with the grounds of common reason, and of that knowledge of God which the light of nature shineth into the hearts of men. If himself had kept close to this principle of his

that matters of a more facile and ordinary consideration were above the capacity and apprehension of reason. It was the saying of Augustin, that “God hath bowed down the Scriptures to the capacity even of babes and sucklings.” Tertullian hath much upon this account to excellent purpose. In one place, speaking of the soul being yet simple, rude, and unfurnished with any acquired knowledge, either from the Scripture or other institution, he demands why it should be strange, that being given by God it

expressions of affinity with the Scriptures as oft coming out of the mouths of heathens, he triumphs, as it were, over them with this acclamation, “O, the testimony of a soul naturally Christian !” Nor doth Calvin himself say any whit less than all this, when he saith, that “God hath implanted,” (or inwardly put) “the seed of religion in the mind, of men.” Doubtless the seed sympathizeth richly with that body which springs and grows from it. But these things by the way. All impressions, all principles

of light and truth, which
axe found written in the
hearts and consciences of
men, are here written by
the finger of God himself.
Therefore what spirit or
doctrine soever
symbolizeth in notion and
import, with these or any of
them, must of necessity be
of the same parentage and
descent with them, there
being no original parent or
father of light and truth,
but God only. And on the
contrary, what doctrine or
spirit soever putteth any of
these principles to sorrow
or shame, and doth not
lovingly comport with

them, hereby declare themselves to be of a spurious and ignoble race, as Christ reasoned with the Jews, “If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth, and came from God,” John 8:42. But because they hated him, he concluded them to be the children of the devil.

Concerning the mystery of the Trinity, the incarnation of God, or the Son of God, the conception of a virgin, with some other points of like consideration, commonly pretended to be against, or

because they are revealed by God; I answer, that this is a rational ground, whereof my reason and understanding are thoroughly capable, why I should believe them. The light of nature clearly informeth me, that what God revealeth or speaketh must needs be true, and consequently worthy and meet to be believed. If it be further said, but reason is not able to apprehend or conceive how three should be really and essentially one, and the same: how a virgin should conceive, and bring forth a son, &c., I

answer that no faith or belief in such things as these is required of me, nor would be accepted with God in case it were in me, above what I am able by my reason to apprehend and understand. As I am not able to apprehend by my reason the particular and distinct manner how the three persons subsist in one and the same Divine nature and essence, so neither am I bound to believe it. That which I am bound to believe in this point is only this, that there are three who do thus subsist, I mean in the same Divine essence,

and for this my reason is apprehensive enough why I should believe it, viz., because God himself hath revealed it, as hath been said. If I should confidently believe anything more or further concerning the trinity of persons, commonly so called, and there is the same reason of the other points mentioned, than what I know upon the clear account of my reason and understanding, it would be presumption in me, and not faith; and I should contract the guilt of those whom the apostle chargeth

conceive, but very consonant hereunto ; as the apostle Paul supposed it credible enough, as we lately heard, even in the eye of reason, that God should make the earth bring forth her dead alive, Acts 26:8. Indeed that a virgin should conceive in a natural way, or according to the course of ordinary Providence, is contrary unto reason; but this religion requireth not of any man to believe. Nor doth it bear hard at all upon any principle of reason, that God should be willing to do every whit as great and strange a thing as

what cases I am commanded by him to do this or that: 3, and lastly, to pass by other particulars, To gather together and call up upon my soul all such motives and considerations which I am able, whereby to provoke, stir up, and strengthen myself to the execution and performance of all things accordingly. When God commandeth me to strive to enter in at the strait gate, to seek his kingdom, and the righteousness thereof in the first place, to labour for the meat which endureth to everlasting life, to be a man

the argument yet in hand. But the sense of that unconceivable mischief and misery, which I most certainly know have been brought upon the Christian world, at least in our quarters of it, and which lie sore upon it at this day, by means of the reigning of this notion or doctrine amongst us, that men ought not to use, but lay aside their reason in matters of religion, lieth so intolerably sad and heavy upon my spirit, that I could not relieve myself to any competent degree, with saying less than what hath

and whatsoever can be named in this world, obstructive, destructive, to the present comfort and peace, to the future blessedness and glory, of the sons and daughters of men, proceed and spring from this one root of bitterness and of death; they neglect to advance and engage home their reasons, judgments, understandings, in matters of religion, to employ and improve them according to their proper interests and capacities in these most important affairs.

O reader, my mouth is open

unto thee, my heart is enlarged. Now for a recompense in the same, I speak unto thee as a dear brother in Christ, he thou also enlarged. Say unto the world round about thee, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Doubtless the world would soon find itself in another manner of posture than now it is, and see the whole hemisphere of it filled with the glorious light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ, if the inhabitants thereof, every man from his

quarters, would be persuaded to rise up in the might of those abilities, those heavenly endowments of reason, judgment, understanding, wherewith God, by Jesus Christ, hath re-invested them, to seek after him, by inquiring diligently into, by weighing narrowly all those things as works of creation, works of providence, inscriptions upon the soul, and especially the sacred word of extraordinary revelation, wherein and whereby God hath drawn near unto men, and, as it were, prepared, postured,

opportunities vouchsafed unto men. The word of God makes it one argument of the wickedness and sensual ways of men, that they have not the Spirit, Jude 18, 19: yea, the apostle Paul by charging the Ephesians to be filled with the Spirit, Eph. 5:18, clearly supposeth it to be a sinful strain of a voluntary unworthiness in men, if they have not a very rich and plentiful anointing of the Spirit. He that lives up to those principles of light which God hath vested in him, is under the beatifical influence of that most rich

promise of Christ, “to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundantly,” Matt. 35:29. By him that hath, in this promise, is meant, as clearly appears from the tenor of the parable immediately preceding, such a person who useth, employeth, improveth that which he hath, hereby declaring that he hath what he hath. Nor is that which he is here said to have, anything of a spiritual or supernatural import. This likewise is evident from the said parable. For here one of the three, who all had

had received any thing saving or supernatural. But by that which is here promised to be given, and that in abundance, to him that hath, must of necessity be meant somewhat that is of a spiritual and saving nature. This also is evident, from the carriage of the same parable, where the servants, who had received the talents, and employed them faithfully, by whom are typified our Saviour's, [GREEK WORDS], those that have, as was lately said, are graciously invited by their master into his joy: "Enter thou into thy

master's joy so to the other; "Enter thou into thy master's joy." Now if either God, or Christ, be signified and meant by the master of those servants, as I suppose no man questions but that either the one or the other are typified hereby, by entering into their joy, cannot be meant a receiving of a greater measure of natural gifts or endowments, nor of receiving any reward which belongs to persons qualified only with such endowments as these, but salvation, or eternal blessedness and glory. If so,

conceit out of the minds of men. In the meantime I shall make thee some part of amends for thy patient bearing of my burden in this point, by as much brevity as thou canst reasonably desire in the third and last particular yet remaining. The tenor hereof was, to remove some stumbling stones, which it is like have been thrown in thy way, to alienate thy mind from the perusal of the discourse ensuing.

For Satan and men have together devised and hammered out a variety of arguments, or pretences, to

finally. But how far this doctrine is from being either uncomfortable, sad, or dismal, I shall not here stand to demonstrate; but refer thee to the ninth chapter of the discourse itself, with several other passages afterwards, where I evidently prove, the two opposite doctrines being duly and impartially compared together, that that which denieth this possibility, is every whit as great, yea, a far greater enemy to the peace and comfort of the saints, than that which affirmeth it.

2. Some labour to work a

grace of God, and only the one remaining unto man. Yea, this one degree of the action is no otherwise neither to be ascribed unto man, than as graciously supported, strengthened, and assisted by the free grace of God. The reader will find none of these positions contradicted by anything affirmed or denied in the discourse. I attribute as much as possibly can be attributed to the free grace of God, in and about the act of believing, saving the attributableness of the action unto man himself, in

other places in the body of the discourse, that they were never rejected or cast out of the church by any council or synod reputed orthodox, at least until the late Synod of Dort, but were constantly taught by all orthodox antiquity, are at this day more generally taught by the Lutheran party of the reformed churches, yea, and have many full and clear testimonies of their truth from the pen of Calvin, himself, and many others that are counted pillars on his side.

4. Some are brought out of

love with such discourses as this, by being informed that they are full of nice, subtle, and curious speculations, and that the secrets of God are too narrowly and presumptuously pried into by the authors of them. To this I answer, 1. If any man, whether in the handling of the doctrines we now speak of, or of any other, advanceth himself into the things which he hath not seen, or above the proportion of his faith, let him suffer as a transgressor of the law of sobriety: I shall not be his advocate.

sight of God, and angels, and men. 3. Things revealed in the Scriptures, as well those of the most spiritual and sublime consideration, which our Saviour calls “heavenly,” John 3:12, and the apostle Paul sometimes “the deep things of God,” 1 Cor. 2:10, sometimes “strong meat,” Heb. 5:14, as well as things of a more obvious and facile import, belong unto us and our children; *i. e.*, are our spiritual patrimony, which God our Father hath given us to maintain ourselves honourably, as *viz.*, in faith and holiness in

can such a saying proceed from any man? or who can say unto the Almighty, with due reverence to the unsearchable riches either of his wisdom or of his grace and bounty, Hitherto indeed thou hast advanced thyself in giving wisdom and understanding unto men, but further thou canst not go, thy treasures are exhausted ? It becometh not me to say, unless I were invested with Paul's privilege of speaking without offence like a fool, 2 Cor. 11:16, 23, that there are several considerations and grounds traversed in

the present discourse, and these intimously relating to the controversies there handled, which I believe the masters of the pretence last specified have not observed in all their travels through those many regions of books and authors which they would be supposed to have read and studied for the information of themselves and others with the truth in those great controversies. And whereas the pretext in hand glorieth that all that hath been said in defence of the opinions avouched in our discourse

this discourse have been from time to time taken up and held, for the most part, by a looser and less religious generation of men, and the contrary by persons of a better name for holiness and worthiness of conversation. This notion is accessory to some men's stumblings at the said opinions, yea, and at all those, whether men or books, that give the right hand of fellowship unto them. But what near communion this notion hath with darkness and untruth is abundantly proved in the ninth,

fifteenth, and nineteenth chapters of the discourse, besides other places. Although the truth is, that, were there truth in it, yet would there be little weight in it to mediate a resolved enmity between men's judgments and these opinions. The devil held that Jesus Christ was the Holy One of God, Mark 1:24, and professed it, while Paul persecuted him and thought verily that he was bound to do many things against his name, Acts 26:9. But to this point I speak more in the said fifteenth, chapter.

men mean by it. I suppose they mean the owning of such doctrines or opinions in opposition to the truth, so voted and called by men, which were held and taught by Arminius. If so, the formality or essence of Arminianism doth not stand in holding anything simply in opposition to the truth, but in opposition unto men, as supposed by themselves and others to be truth. The Jewish doctors, who love to be called Rabbi, have a saying, that the law is on earth, not in heaven; the import of which saying Musculus interprets to be

Church were generally Arminian: yea, and that Calvin himself had many sore fits and pangs of Arminianism, at times, upon him, yea, and that the Synod of Dort itself was not free from the infection; nor scarce any writer of name and note in these latter times. These things are brought into a clear and unquestionable light by the discourse ensuing. Concerning Socinianism; if the opinions themselves charged herewith know no more than I do of the truth of the charge, they may justly take up David's

But to this we briefly answer, 1. That it is much better that men's judgments and consciences should be for a time disturbed, than that they should always remain settled upon the lees and dregs of any rotten and unsound opinion. We lately showed how perilous error is to the precious souls of men. God never dealt more graciously by the earth than when he shook the heavens, by sending the Messiah of the world to turn the state of religion, as it were, upside down in the midst of it. David

acknowledged unto God that it was good for him that he had been afflicted; that so he might learn his statutes, Psal. 119:71. And so many, I believe, have, and happy were it had more the like cause to say it: it is good for us that we were sometimes shaken in our judgments and consciences, that we might learn the truth. 2. They who are offended, that there should be arguings and disputes to and fro about the things of God, and matters of religion, seem to be either discontented that the things and counsels of

same nature and import, in the house of one Tyrannus, ver. 9, 10. 3, and lastly. Had it not been for disputes in matters of religion, the pillars of antichrist's throne had not been shaken to this day. Upon occasion of those frequent disputes in Germany about matters of religion in Luther's days, a magistrate and judge of the popish party said: "If it comes to matter of dispute our whole mystery will be confounded." And as wisdom saith, "All they that hate me love death," Prov. 8:36; so may sober and thorough examinations and

who labour to represent my present judgment in the said points, as little valuable or considerable, because it sometimes stood a contrary way. Though I know nothing in the allegation subservient in the least degree to the end and purpose therein mentioned, but rather much against it; yet let me say, 1. That however sin and an evil conversation are just matter of shame and disparagement unto a man, yet repentance and amendment of life are truly honourable. Nor do I know why it should be of any

informeth us, that “there will be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, that need no repentance,” Luke 15:7. That which is an occasion of a multiplied rejoicing in heaven, why should it be made matter of complaint, charge, or imputation upon earth? 6. He is in the most likely and best capacity to give a right judgment between two countries or lands, as which is the more fruitful, the more healthful, the more pleasant of situation, &c., who hath been an inhabitant in both,

and acquainted himself with the respective conditions of both in such particulars. In like manner, it is so far from being a reason, why a man's present judgment should be rejected, that he hath been of a contrary judgment formerly, that it rendereth it the more considerable and competent to discern aright between those opinions, with which it hath been thoroughly, and upon a conscientious engagement, acquainted. It is a true saying of the heathen philosopher, "*GREEK*

WORDS” *i. e.* Every man is able to judge well of those things which he knoweth. But when a man, having a long time known and professed such an opinion, by and under the profession whereof he enjoyed peace, credit, wealth, love and respect from men of all sorts, and was in a fair and probable way to have lift up his head yet higher in the world, by his continuance in the profession of the same, shall notwithstanding relent in his judgment, and quit the profession of this opinion, and profess that

which is opposite to it, wherein he could not hut in all reason judge and conclude beforehand, that he should with Paul, suffer loss of all things, lose credit, lose friends, lose all hopes of preferment from the world; when a man, I say, shall change his judgment upon such terms as these, it is a strong argument that he well and thoroughly understands the spiritual danger and inconvenience of the opinion which he forsakes, as likewise the worth, truth, and goodness of that which he embraceth and

REDEMPTION REDEEMED.

CHAPTER 1.

There is no created being, or second cause whatsoever, but dependeth upon the first and supreme Cause or Being, which is God: and this as well in the second as in the first act; I mean as well in the motions and operations issuing from, or performed by, every of them, as in their simple existence or being itself.

their operations (respectively, which is the sense and substance of the thesis propounded.) be not altogether of so pregnant an inspiration as dependence upon him for their production, and first bringing into being; yet conceiving it not to be of any difficult or remote speculation, nor finding it so much as controverted or questioned by any considering man, especially of latter times, we shall in these respects content ourselves with a brief and light inquiry upon it.

The Holy Ghost indeed

of truth and apprehension, may be transcendently weighty and high in those things, whether relating unto practice or opinion, which are enfolded and contained in them, and deducible from them. Mary was but a carpenter's wife, yet did she bring forth the Great Messiah and Saviour of the world. But this only occasionally. The truth held forth in the thesis is the clear doctrine of the apostle Paul, and that preached at Athens, amongst philosophers, for learning and knowledge, the princes of the world. "For in him,"

saith he, speaking of God,
“we live, and move, and
are, or subsist,” (as the
original GREEK,
importeth,) GREEK, “in
him,” *i. e.* through him, or
by means of him, (as the
preposition *tv*) frequently
signifieth, Acts 17:28. We
are not said to live, move,
and have our beings in God
in a way of permission only,
as, viz., because he refrains
the exercise of that power
in him, by which he is as
able to take away all our
beings as he was at first to
give them; or because he
forbears to annihilate us: in
such a sense as this, we

members thereof, which remaining in union with it, preserveth it from dissolution and putrefaction; or as the presence of the sun is to the light in the air, which retains its being, whilst the sun shines upon it, but vanisheth presently, and becomes that which is not as soon as the fountain of light withdraweth his shining. The Holy Ghost himself expresseth the dependence of creatures upon God in a borrowed resemblance of very near affinity with this: “Thou hidest thy face,” saith

relapse into its first vanity or nothing: for that which is able to preserve itself from falling needs no support, or bearing up by another.

2. That Christ feels no weight, or burden of the universe, whilst he supporteth it. The speaking of a word, especially within himself, and in his mind only, engageth no man's strength, nor putteth him to the least pain. This great act of bearing up the universe, is therefore, I conceive, appropriated unto Christ, though common to the other

but that all that honourable retinue likewise of those excellent powers and faculties named, which attend upon the principle of life in man, is maintained in being by the same compliance also.

Whereas, he adds, that in him, also, GREEK, we move, or are moved, as the word rather importeth, he implieth, not only that all our vital actions and motions are exercised and performed by the gracious concurrence and compliance of God with us, as well as our Jives themselves, and principles

of action preserved; but, further, that there is a further and appropriate concurrence of God required, and by him accordingly exhibited, to enable men to act those very principles of action and motion that are in them, distinct from that by which their lives, and principles of action in every kind are preserved: insomuch, that though men be never so well appointed or provided for action in one kind or other, in respect of suitable, proper, and sufficiently disposed principles thereunto; yet,

upon a suspension of that particular influence or concurrence by God, which is appropriate and necessary, both for the leading forth, unto, and for the supporting of these principles, in and under their proper actions, there is none of them will go forth into action, nor is able to maintain or support itself in acting. But whether such a concurrence of God supposed, and actually granted, as is sufficient both for the leading forth unto, and for the support of the principles we speak of, in their proper actings,

furnace, whilst the three men continued in it. 3. And, lastly, the story saith, that “the princes, governors, and captains, &c. being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power,” Dan. 3:27. So that there is not the least question, but that there was real fire and real heat, and that in abundance in the furnace; which notwithstanding had no power, no, not so much as over the hair of their heads, or the garments they wore. What now was the reason why this fire and this heat

endeavours, even unto weariness, in seeking this door. If they had been wholly blind, so that they could have seen nothing at all, it is no ways credible but that they would have desisted their enterprise at the very first. This withdrawing or suspension of the wonted presence of God with the seeing faculty of men, is called “the holding of their eyes,” Luke 24:16. “But their eyes were holden, that they could not know him:” , they were mightily or powerfully held: they could not act, or perform that which

natural faculties, through the suspension of that sovereign presence with them, upon which all their motions and actions depend. See John 20:14, 15; 2 Kings 6:17, 18, &c.

When God threatened his people of old, “That the wisdom of their wise men should perish, and the understanding of their prudent men be hid,” Isa. 29:14, he doth not, I suppose, threaten an utter annihilation of those principles or habits of wisdom and understanding in these men, but only an intercision or failing of

execution of the judgment here threatened, seems to be implied in those latter words, “And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid,” *i.e.* shall not be conspicuous or discernible in any fruits or effects worthy of it; not that the principle itself should be absolutely destroyed, or divested of being. This liberty, or great interest of God, which we speak of, I mean, to suspend the proper and most accustomed effects of second causes, by refusing to join in action with them,

causeth that time and chance, as the wise man calleth them, which happen now and then in those occurrences of human affairs, as, viz. when “ the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,” &c. Eccles. 9: 11.

If it be here demanded, inasmuch as second causes and created principles, especially in men, act, notwithstanding such a subtraction of the Divine presence from them, as hath been declared, though not according to the perfection of their natures, but in a troubled and

from that which is constant, and more agreeable to their natures, shall we suppose they have with them when they act irregularly or deficiently ?

To this I answer:

1. Whensoever second causes move into action, whether they act congruously to their respective natures and kinds, or whether defectively, they still have, and must have, a presence of the first cause with them, as hath been already argued. But,

2. When they fail or falter in their motions or actings,

if their motions be such which are not moral, or commanded by the will, (of which kind the misrepresentation of the person of Christ by the eyes, or visive faculty of the two apostles was,) I conceive that the presence or concourse of the first cause with them, is attempered and proportioned in order to the deficiency of the action; I mean as well to the degree as kind of this deficiency, and is not the same with itself in the ordinary and proper actings of these faculties. The reason hereof

withdrawing that concurrence or conjunction of himself with them, without which they cannot act, but only upon some special design, as, for example, now and then to be a remembrancer unto the world, that nature and second causes are not autocratorical, *i. e.* do not perform, what ordinarily they do perform, independently, and of themselves, hut that he is the sovereign Lord of them, and hath all the strength and operations of them in his hand. The battle commonly is to the strong,

and the race ordinarily to the swift, and bread most frequently to men of understanding, &c. But more of this also in the following chapter.

The apostle affirming, That in God we live and move, in the sense declared, passeth the sentence of condemnation against two opinions, which yet condemn one the other also, being two extremes, leaving the truth between them in the middle. The former denies all co-operation of the first cause with the second, affirming, That God only

communicateth that
operating virtue unto them,
which they respectively
exert and put forth, and
preserveth it, but doth not
at all co-operate with it.
The latter affirmeth, That it
is God only who acteth or
worketh at the presence of
second causes, and that
these do nothing but stand
by, act not at all. The
former of
these opinions was held by
Durandus, the schoolman,
and by some others, far
more ancient than he;
against whom Augustin
disputeth, Lib. v. de Gen.
ad lit. c. 20. The latter, by

Gabriel Biel, a schoolman also, and some others of that learning. The apostle's assertion, That we move in God in the sense asserted, is visibly, attended with these two consequential truths: 1. That God doth associate himself and communicate with second causes and all created principles, in their respective motions and operations; and consequently contributes more towards their motions and operations, than only by a collation and conservation of a sufficient strength or virtue in their

respective causes to produce them. 2. That the ordinary effects, acts, and operations produced in these sublunary parts are not so, or upon any such terms attributable unto God, but that they have their second causes also respectively producing them, whereunto they may as truly, and perhaps more properly, be ascribed as unto God.

CHAPTER 2.

Though there be as absolute and essential a

dependence of second causes upon the first, in point of motion, action, and operation, as of simple existence or being ; yet are not the motions, actions, or operations of second causes, at least ordinarily, so immediately or precisely determined by that dependence which they have upon the first cause as their respective beings are.

THE simple existences or beings of things maybe said to be determined by God, the first cause, three ways.

the most part, interpose effectually, though by the mediation of causes, either natural or moral, or both, for a determination in this kind also. The continuance of herbs, plants, and trees in their vegetative lives or beings, in respect of their species or kinds respectively, is determined by God, but by the intervention of their several natures, temperatures, constitutions, or the like. So that those herbs, plants, or trees more generally, and in respect of their kinds, are longer lived whose tempers and

at pleasure serve himself of which and of how many of them he pleaseth, being within the reach of his arm and under his power. A man may cut down, and suffer still to grow, which and how many of the trees growing in his own ground he pleaseth. Thus may he do also by the herbs in his garden. There is the same consideration in all respects of sensitive creatures also. The lives of many of these are subjected to the wills and pleasures of men.

Concerning the natural lives and beings of men in

destructive unto life, they may put it farther from them. “But thou, O God,” saith David, “shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days,” Psa. 55:23; *i.e.* the half of those days, which according to the course of nature, and providence, and will of God otherwise, they might have done. To like purpose, Eliphaz in Job, speaking of a wicked man who stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty; *i. e.*

the life of man, may advance their days to a greater number than under a contrary neglect, especially as the neglect for degree might have been, they would or could in reason have amounted unto, is evident. God himself informed David that if he staid in Keilah till Saul should come thither to demand him, which he was now ready to do, the lords of this city would deliver him up unto him, 1 Sam. 23:12, in which case he had been but a dead man: therefore David, by departing from Keilah

before Saul's coming down to demand him, added many days unto his life above what their number would have been had he neglected the Divine oracle, and, by staying in Keilah, fallen into the hands of Saul. The men that were with Paul in the ship, by hearkening unto his counsel for causing the mariners to abide in the ship, got enlargement of quarter for their lives, which, upon their leaving of the ship, had certainly been denied unto them; for Paul said unto the centurion and the soldiers,

forth against him. For this is the reason which the angel gave unto Joseph why he was enjoined by God to remove the child Jesus into a place of safety: “Herod,” saith he, “will seek the young child to destroy him,” which supposeth not only a possibility, but a probability at least, if not a certainty, that, if the child had remained in or about Bethlehem, Herod both would have found him out and also destroyed him. So, afterwards we read, Luke 4., and elsewhere, that Christ, by declining the present rage and bloody

suppose that the bounds and limits of all men's lives are so rigidly or immoveably pitched by any decree of God, that they must of necessity live home to them, and cannot possibly live beyond them; but only this, that if God will at any time interpose by his power to cut off the life of any man, he may determine and put a period to it without being resisted or hindered by any. According to the exigency of this sense, both Tremellius and Beza translate that clause "And the number of his months

are with thee, out of the original, thus, “Numerus mensium ejus penes te est; *i.e.*, the number of his months is in thy power,” meaning, that thou mayest make them fewer or more, if, and as thou pleasest. Doubtless, if either David or Hezekiah had conceived the date and period of their lives to have been irreversibly concluded by any precedaneous decree of God, they would not have interceded with that affectionate importunity which is found in their prayers for a prorogation of them. “I

said,” saith David, “O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days,” Psal. 102:24; and again, “O spare me, that I may recover my strength before I go hence and be no more,” Psal. 39:23. These expressions clearly imply that David apprehended as well a liberty in God as an executive power, either presently to take away or else to continue his life and being in the world for a longer time : for who will solicit a man to do that for him which he apprehends him in no capacity or possibility to do ? or for

presently to take away the life of it, but at liberty to do either. In the prayer of Hezekiah, though there be no express petition found for the enlargement of his life, yet there are grounds laid down which are proper to enforce such a petition upon, and by the tender whereof unto God it is evident that he did solicit for a reprieve, which is yet more apparent from that gracious return which God made unto him of this his prayer by the prophet Isaiah: “Go,” saith God unto him, “and say unto Hezekiah, Thus saith the

Lord God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, and seen thy tears ; behold I will add unto thy days fifteen years,” Isa. 38:5. Therefore, doubtless, when Job saith, as we heard, that the days of man are determined, or, *praecisi, i. e.*, cut short, as Junius and Tremellius render it, and that God hath appointed his bounds that he cannot pass, he doth not speak of any determinate number of days or years set out by any decree of his unto particular persons for life, which by no interveniency

in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day,” Psal. 91:5—7. But daily experience showeth that God doth not engage himself upon such terms as these for the protection of the lives of all that are godly, many of these falling by the hand of death even whilst the lives of thousands and tens of thousands round about them are not touched therewith: nor have any persons, though never so godly, any sufficient ground from the passages mentioned, or the like, to expect, absolutely and with

for the dissolution of it. But neither of these dispensations amounts to any demonstration of any such decree in God, wherein he hath punctually and indispensably assigned to all persons whatsoever a set number of years, months, days, hours, and moments for their allowance of life, which neither himself nor themselves, nor any other creature, hath the least liberty or power either to augment or diminish upon any occasion or by any means whatsoever. It is indeed commonly reported

without any knowledge or apprehension at all, (as being capable of neither,) either of the end, for the obtaining whereof they act or move, or of their motions or actings in order to this end. Or, 2. Such which are capable of some kind of knowledge or apprehension, both of their ends, and of their actings and movings towards these ends, but very imperfect and weak, viz., such which extend not to the reason or relation of these ends, nor to any deliberation about them, nor yet to the proportion or aptness of

them, (at least in some particulars,) and, second, are acted and moved accordingly; as either to or from them, but without any deliberation or consideration had, either about the one or the other. Of this kind are beasts of the field, birds of the air, fishes of the sea, and generally whatsoever hath breath and life, excepting men. These are said to act or move spontaneously, because they act out of some knowledge of their end, without any compulsion or necessitation from without.

dependence upon God, that, as hath been said, none of them can move into action without a suitable concurrence from him, yet are not their actions or motions thereby determined ordinarily, or necessitated unto or upon them. The reason why fire burns, or heats, and doth not moisten, cool, or the like, is not because God concurrereth with it when it acteth; for then air or water should burn and heat likewise, with a like concurrence. Therefore the particular and determinate actions of the fire are not

caused by, do not flow from that concurrence of God with it when it acteth, but from that intrinsical form, or those natural properties which he hath vested in it by the law of creation. There is the same reason of other causes of this kind in their respective actions or effects. Nor are the motions or actings of the second kind of causes mentioned, as of birds, beasts, &c., any whit more determined than of the former, by the presence of God with them in their actions; but partly by their natural abilities for action or motion, partly by

the natural proportions and
disproportions between
their respective estimatives
or phantasies, and such
and such creatures or
objects, whose natures are
either proportioned or
disproportioned unto
them. As for example, the
reason why a lamb runneth
to the dam, and fleeth from
the wolf, is partly the
natural sympathy between
the phantasy of the lamb
and the dam, and the
antipathy between the said
phantasy and the wolf;
partly also that ability or
nimbleness of motion
which God hath given unto

there being no law of God imposing it as a duty upon thee, to sell it? “And when it was sold was it not in thy power?” viz., whether thou wouldst part with the money which thou receivedst for it, or no? The word, translated power, doth not only signify a power of right, but of liberty also, or a freedom of will to dispose of it, as he pleased; otherwise, a power of right had been of no accommodation unto him, nor any competent matter of the aggravation of his sin. “Why hast thou put this thing into thy heart ?” viz.,

determined, (as hath been proved,) by the specifical natures or properties of every of them respectively, and not by any concurrence of God with them, yet their individual and particular actions and motions are determined by some kind of concurrence, or providential interposal of God. As for example, that fire, in the general, burneth that which is combustibile being put to it, is, from the nature of it, not from any concurrence of God with it; but that it burneth such or such a man's house, goods, or the like, this is not

simply from the nature of it, without some special disposal of Divine Providence. So, again, that wicked and ungodly men should, in the general, do wickedly, as, for instance, plot, contrive, accomplish the death of such as are godly, proceedeth from themselves, and from the corruption of their wills, not from any concurrence of God with them, nor from any special interposal of his in such actings. But that such and such wicked men by name, should plot, and effect the deaths of such and such godly men by

name, and not the death of others, godly also, proceedeth not so much from the wickedness of such men, as from some special decree of God, together with a suitable interposal of his providence and power, for the effecting of it. That which Herod, and Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles, and the Jews, did, in and about the crucifying of Christ, Peter saith, that “the hand and counsel of God had determined before to be done,” Acts 4:28. To this I answer,

1. That this particular and signal attribution of some

special actions or events unto God, or to the determination of his hand and counsel, (other instances whereof are to be seen, 1 Kings 12:15; 2 Sam. 17:14; Jos. 11:20; Deut. 2:30, &c.,) clearly argueth, that ordinarily actions are performed by men, and events come to pass upon other terms; I mean, without any such particular or extraordinary interposition by God, either by way of decree, or of providential efficiency, or contribution towards them. Emphatical and remarkable appropriations

predetermination had passed in the counsel of God. For it is not here said, that God gathered Herod, or Pilate, or any of the rest together, to act in this business; but, (as our former translation read it,) that they gathered themselves together. Thus Calvin also translateth it, “Convenerunt enim,” &c., *i.e.*, They came or met together, &c. Nor doth the passive reading of the word, were gathered together, imply any acting, much less any compulsive acting on God’s part, in uniting or drawing them

hereby the magnifying of God (together with the strengthening of their own faith) for his most gracious and wonderful dispensation, in and about the death and sufferings of Christ; as viz. that in order to the redemption and salvation of the world, he should so fax dispense with the counsels and methods of his ordinary providence in protecting the innocent and righteous, as to expose or leave his holy Child (or Son) Jesus, the most innocent and righteous person of all others, to the rage, malice, and cruelty of

uncertainty for matter of execution, in case he had not absolutely and positively decreed the death of Christ by one means or other, as either by those who now did effect it, or by some other men ? To this I answer,

No: the salvation of the world, doubtless, did not depend upon the actual or literal dying, or crucifying of Christ, but partly upon the counsel and good pleasure of God, to deliver him up unto death in order to this end; *i. e.* to leave him freely unto men to crucify him if they would,

partly upon the readiness and perfect submission of will in Christ to suffer death, in case any man or men should be found that would inflict it upon him. My grounds and reasons for this opinion are:

1. If the salvation of the world depends wholly and entirely upon the merit and satisfaction of Christ, in conjunction with the will and good pleasure of God the Father to accept of this satisfaction in order thereunto, then did it, doth it, no ways depend upon anything done by other men, especially wicked

had crucified him or no.

3. If the acceptation of the sacrifice of Christ depended only upon, 1. The nature, quality, and legitimacy of the sacrifice. 2. Upon the legitimacy and dignity of the priest offering. 3, and lastly. Upon the legitimacy of the manner observed in the offering, then was not the act of those who crucified Christ any ways contributing towards the acceptation of this sacrifice; and if so, the acceptation hereof with God had been the same,

and consequently the salvation of the world, purchased and procured by it, whether men had interposed to crucify Christ or no. Evident it is, that they who crucified Christ neither gave legitimacy to the sacrifice ; nor were any legitimate priests, upon whose actings about the sacrifice the acceptation of the offering any ways depended; nor, 3. Did they in what they did about the crucifying of Christ, observe any legitimacy of order or manner which should render the oblation acceptable with God.

Therefore the acceptance of that great sacrifice we spake of with God, depended wholly upon Christ himself; who, 1. In respect of his person, was a legitimate sacrifice to make that great atonement for the world that was made by him. 2. In respect of his office, was a legitimate high priest, anointed by God to offer that great sacrifice of himself. 3, and lastly. By virtue of his holiness, love, zeal, and all other heavenly endowments requisite for his office of priesthood, performed the oblation with a perfect observation

of all the requirements appertaining to the law or manner of such an offering. In none of all these had he the least dependence upon those who put him to death; nor stood he in need of their wickedness in crucifying him, to make him either sacrifice, priest, or oblation of highest acceptance with God.

4. The apostle expressly affirmeth concerning men, that “if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted” (meaning with God) “according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not,” 2 Cor.

saying, that God accepts the will for the deed. Now there is no reason to conceive or think but that God should deal in a way of as much equity and grace with Christ as he doth with other men. Therefore supposing that there was a clear, perfect, and entire willingness or readiness of mind in Christ to lay down his life for the world, hut he had wanted an opportunity actually to have done it, (as suppose no man should have appeared to take away his life from him,) there is no sufficient reason to think but that he had been

meritorious; and consequently of no absolute necessity for, or towards the redemption of the world. Sed verum prius: ergo et posterius. The former consequence in this argument is evident, because nothing, whether action or passion, can be meritorious without something in it or relating to it, which should give it the weight or worth of merit. The latter consequence is no less evident neither. For whatever, whether doings or sufferings, are wholly void of merit, though, they

Pet. 1:19; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26—28, with many others of like import. Now certain it is, 1. That the excellency and dignity of the person of Christ was and would have been the same. 2. That the innocency, humility, love, patience, obedience of Christ were, and would have been the same also, whether he had actually and corporally suffered or no. Therefore whatsoever was properly, formally, or essentially meritorious in Christ, was in him before his sufferings of a natural death, and would have been in him whether he had

suffered such a death or no; and consequently the work of redemption might have prospered in his hand, whether he had thus suffered or not.

If it be demanded ; but doth not this doctrine suppose or make Christ to have died in vain? yea, and contradict all those scriptures which ascribe the redemption and salvation of men to his blood, death, cross, and suffering? I answer, neither; it is most free from both these erroneous impieties. From the former, because the death of Christ

necessity of Christ's actual and external death, in order to the salvation of the world, no ways rendereth or supposeth this death of his to be in vain.

Nor doth the doctrine we now speak of contradict any of those scriptures which attribute the redemption and salvation of the world to his blood, death, sufferings, &c. For when we are said to be healed by his stripes, 1 Pet. 2:24; to be "justified by his blood," Rom. 5:9 ; to "have redemption through his blood," Eph. 1:7, &c., it no ways supposeth or implies,

and speak of an act simply, and indefinitely, as performed and done, when the doing of it hath been fully resolved, concluded, or consented unto in the heart and soul, whether ever it be actually and externally done, or no. Thus, Abraham, in the same verse, is twice said to have offered up his son Isaac, Heb. 11:17, only because he was inwardly, really, and folly willing to have offered him up literally, which yet we know he did not. So a man is said to “forsake all he hath,” Luke 14:33, when he is

injustice of men, but did all this, performed all these acts within his own sphere, yea, and had performed them, before the least drop of his blood was spilt by men; and consequently the redemption and salvation of the world were provided for by him in all things essential, and simply necessary thereunto, before either Herod or Pilate, the Gentiles or the Jews interposed with any of their counsels or engagements for the crucifying of him.

Thus, then, we see what the Christians mean, in saying that “ Herod, and

GREEK, translated, to be done, doth not import any eventual certainty, or indispensable necessity of the coming to pass of those things, which Herod, Pilate, &c. gathered themselves together to do, and accordingly did, about the crucifying of Christ; but only the possibility, or, if we will, the probability of their coming to pass upon the determined permission of God in that behalf. For that the permissive decree of God, doth not import the certainty or necessity of event in things so decreed, is afterwards proved in this

chapter. It is a form of speech frequent in the Scriptures, to speak of things probable, or likely to come to pass, as if they should or would simply and certainly come to pass; and so again to use the infinitive mood in a potential sense, or signification. An instance of the former we have, Deut. 13:11, “And all Israel shall hear, and fear, and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you.” The meaning is not, that it shall certainly and infallibly thus come to pass, viz. that no Israelite,

hearing of the judgment executed upon the idolatrous seducer, would ever commit the like wickedness afterwards, but that the hearing of such a severe course taken with such an offender, should be a probable and likely means to preserve others from the like wickedness. Another passage of like expression and import, you have, Deut. 17:13, and again, Deut. 9:20; see also Gen. 21: 6; Num. 14:13, 14; John 11:48, to omit other the like without number. An instance of the latter we have, Rom. 1:20, GREEK

i.e. That they might be, or that they may be, as our last translators render it in their margin, or, that they should be, as our former translators had it, without excuse, viz. in case they glorify not God as God. See also Rom. 4:11, where the infinitive mood is twice used in such a potential sense as we speak of. So when Christ saith unto Simon and Andrew, Mark 1:17, "Follow me," GREEK "and I will make" or cause "you to be" or, to become "fishers of men," his meaning is not, that upon condition they would follow

him, he would compel, or force them to be “fishers of men,” he might have done this as well without persuading them to follow him, but that he would furnish them with such wisdom and knowledge, with such a heavenly art and skill, that if their hearts would serve them for the employment, they might, and should, be excellently accomplished and fitted by him, for the drawing of men out of the world unto God. See also Mark 10:44; Luke 8:35; 23:24.

And, to cite no more places upon this account, which

readily might be done to a far greater number, in the next verse save one to the words in hand, the same speakers express themselves thus: GREEK *i. e.* “And that signs and wonders *may be done* by the name,” &c. So that whereas in the scripture in debate, we have the original, translated, to be done, as if the meaning were, that the hand and counsel of God had positively and conclusively determined, that all those things should be done, which now were done by Herod, Pilate, &c., about

then here is nothing in this Scripture to prove, that God peremptorily decreed or determined beforehand the crucifying of Christ by Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, or the Jews, or by any other persons; but only that in order to his great and blessed design of saving the world, he thus decreed, that either these, or any other, in case these had not done it, should be at liberty to perpetrate this great wickedness, and that he would not by his hand or power interpose to hinder them, in case they should attempt it, which he from

determine events
beforehand; without
determining means or
instruments which shall
infallibly produce, or give
being unto them ? or, doth
he determine anything, the
effecting whereof he
leaveth in the liberty and
power of men, so that they
may choose whether it shall
be effected or no ? I answer,
1. In the general, that God
never determineth
anything but what he either
provideth means himself,
or else knoweth himself
sufficiently provided
otherwise to bring to pass;
viz., according to the tenor,

forever, how much soever it should at any time degenerate from itself in sin and wickedness; but hypothetical and provisional, thus: the priesthood shall remain forever in Eli's house, provided that his house remains faithful, and observant of the law of their God concerning this dignity. This purpose or determination of God I call absolute and unchangeable, because "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to

come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature,” by any interposition whatsoever, could, or should have hindered the said duration or continuance of the priesthood in Eli’s house, in case it had remained faithful. The Scriptures abound with instances of like consideration with these See 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:21, &c.

3. God may leave the execution or fulfilling of his determinations, such as they may be, at the free liberty and in the power of men, and yet have

and counsel of God might
and did absolutely
determine the giving up of
his Son Jesus Christ to
suffer death upon the cross,
and yet not determine
either that Herod, Pontius
Pilate, or any other person
or persons by name should
have acted in this his
determination; knowing
certainly, 3.1. That these
men would act it freely and
without being any ways
determined, yea, or in the
least degree excited by him
hereunto.

3.2. That in case these had
not acted it, there were
enough in the world

special design and intendment of God, as is clearly to be seen in the instances already pointed at. Deut. 2:27, compared with ver. 30; Josh. 11:20; 2 Sam. 17:14? ; 1 Kings 11:15; and Acts 4:28, compared with Rom. 4:25, and 8:32, &c. Therefore,

5. Concerning the ordinary and constant motions and actions of other creatures in the world, though the least of them cometh. not to pass without the knowledge and foreknowledge of God (in such a sense as foreknowledge is

attributable unto him), nor without his prudential disposal of them to their, or rather his, respective ends, yet can they not be said to be determined by him in any other sense, or consideration, than this, viz. as he was the Author of such and such determinate natures, properties, and beings in the creation, which, by his ordinary concurrence with them for support and action, are apt to move or to act after such or such a manner determinately. The regular and respective motions, shillings, influences of the

sun, moon, and stars, the flowing of rivers from their fountains, together with the decurrency of their waters into the sea, with a thousand things besides of like consideration, are no otherwise determined by God than has been said.

6. Concerning the particular motions, actions, and exertions of such creatures, or causes, which though merely natural, do not move, act, or exert uniformly or without variation, but with, a latitude and disproportion in their motions and effects, there is ground, I

accordingly to their most appropriate ends. When our Saviour teacheth his disciples that a sparrow shall not fall to the ground, *i. e.*, be taken, killed, or hurt, without his heavenly Father, his meaning is not to assert a particular decree or determination in God concerning the death or hurt of every sparrow that either dieth or receiveth harm, but to show that God is vigilant and careful in his rule and government of the world, and taketh exact notice how his creatures suffer or are diminished. It is more proper of the two,

yea, and this necessarily; for, doubtless, God hath decreed, and intendeth, to leave natural causes generally to their natural and proper operations and productions; yea, and voluntary causes also, under a power and at liberty to act ten thousand things more than ever they will do or shall do. For example, God intendeth and hath decreed to permit that fire shall bum what combustible matter soever it shall take hold of, or that shall he cast into it; that one spark of it falling into a barrel of dried gunpowder

this permissive decree of God that therefore these lords must necessarily deliver up David into Saul's hand; for we know they did it not. So, likewise, God hath decreed to permit any man to destroy the life of another whom he meets with, I mean, in respect of a natural power to do the execution; but it followeth not from hence that therefore every man must necessarily murder or destroy the life of his brother that cometh in his way. So that evident it is, that no decree of God whatsoever which is simply

them to pass. Though God hath decreed that a spark or coal of fire falling, *i. e.* in case it shall fall, into a barrel of gunpowder, shall fire it, yet it doth not follow from hence that he hath decreed that any such spark or coal shall fall into it, without which, notwithstanding the effect decreed, *viz.* the firing of this powder, will not come to pass Or, if it be said that God hath decreed that such a spark or coal shall fall into the said barrel of powder, now is not the decree barely permissive, but operative and assertive,

supposed withal that he knoweth it may not come to pass, or that it may come to pass otherwise, than according to this knowledge, doth not this suppose or imply a consciousness in God of the weakness or deficiency of his knowledge ?

I answer, no; but rather the contrary; viz., a consciousness in him of the strength and perfection of his knowledge. For he that knoweth not that contingent and free-working causes, which way soever they shall act in order to any particular

knowledge of his, not come to pass, reflects no dishonour or disparagement at all upon his knowledge, but rather gives an honourable and high testimony of excellency and perfection unto it. For he that certainly knows what contingent and free-working causes will do, notwithstanding their freedom and liberty either to do, or not to do, or to do otherwise, must needs be excellent in knowledge indeed, and one who needeth not count it robbery to be equal with

and act according to their native properties and inclinations respectively, without countermanding them, or turning them out of their way, are these, with their fellows: First, nature with all her train and retinue of particular causes, together with all their furniture of principles for motion and action, being the workmanship of his own hand, if he should ordinarily or frequently interpose to change her laws, or innovate her course, he should seem to pull down that which himself hath built up, and

course. He hath sufficient security that his handmaid left unto herself (only with his ordinary and regular concurrence, without which she can neither move nor be) will no ways misbehave herself in order to his ends, and those concernments of his glory wherewith she is intrusted. So that for him to check, or control her in her way, would be but a kind of condemning the innocent, which is, when practised amongst men, an abomination to him. Thirdly, and lastly, if he should customarily, and of

CHAPTER 3.

Concerning the foreknowledge and knowledge of God; and the difference between these, and his desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees: and how these also are distinguished the one from the other.

IT is not to be denied, but that the Scriptures do attribute GREEK, or foreknowledge unto God in several places, as Acts 2:23;

that our table proves not a snare unto us; my meaning is, lest those things which are metaphorically spoken of God for the accommodation of our understandings, and to enrich us with such conceptions, apprehensions, and knowledge of him, as we are well capable of, according to the truth of his nature and being, be not so interpreted or understood by us, as to occasion any such fancies or imaginations in us, which are unworthy of him, and inconsistent with the truth

of his being.

That prescience or foreknowledge are not formally or properly in God, is the constant assertion, both of ancient and modern divinity. The learned assertors of the protestant cause are at perfect agreement with their adversaries the schoolmen, and papists, in this. Nor is it any wonder at all that there should be peace, and a concurrence of judgment about such a point as this, even between those Who have many irons of contention otherwise in the fire, considering how

adequate and appropriate object of this knowledge, in the propriety of it, being res futura, somewhat that is to come. Thirdly, and lastly, There is nothing in the creature univocally and formally the same with anything which is in God. The reason is, because then there must either be somewhat finite in God, or somewhat infinite in the creature; both which are impossible. But if prescience or foreknowledge, being properly or formally in the creature, should be properly or formally also in

God, there should be somewhat in the creature, univocally and formally the same with somewhat which is in God. Therefore certainly there is no foreknowledge, properly so called, in God.

If it be objected, that this argument lieth as strong against the propriety of knowledge, as of foreknowledge, in God; inasmuch as knowledge is every whit as properly and formally in the creature as foreknowledge; I answer,

True it is, there is no knowledge neither in God, according to the precise

time; whereas knowledge imports nothing but what may be permanent and perpetual, and so is of the two more appropriable unto him who changeth not.

But though neither knowledge, nor foreknowledge, can in strictness and formality of notion be ascribed unto God, yet since both the one and the other are frequently in Scripture attributed unto him, necessary it is that we make inquiry into the grounds and reasons of such attributions. For it is no

to consider the respective natures, the different manners of operation, the divers effects, or ordinary consequences of those things in the creature, whether they be actions, passions, habits, parts, or whatsoever, which are upon such terms attributed unto God. For still we shall find something or other proceeding from God, or done by him, which holds proportion and correspondeth with some or other, one or more, of the ordinary effects or consequents of those things in the creature which are so

itself upon occasion, out of
and by means of such
principles or instruments
of action, being in the
propriety or formality of
their respective natures in
them, which are ascribed
unto God. As for example,
to give the world
knowledge, that the Divine
nature can, and upon just
occasion will, yea, and doth
many times, express itself
after such a manner, and
with such a kind of effect,
as men use to express
themselves out of anger, as,
viz. by reproving,
expostulating, withdrawing
themselves, striking,

punishing, and the like, the Holy Ghost oft ascribeth the passion, or impression of anger, unto God. There is the same consideration of all those other creature affections, as of love, zeal, grief, sorrow, repentance, delight, mercy, compassion, &c. And so also of all those organical parts or members of a human body, as eyes, ears, hands, heart, &c., which are so frequently in the Scriptures attributed unto God. These respective attributions give the light of this knowledge of God unto the world, that the Divine

nature, though most singly, simply, most undividedly and indivisibly one, is yet able, out of the infinite perfection of it, to act all that variety and diversity of action and effect which the creature is wont to act out of such affections, and by means of such organs or members respectively.

To come in to the particular in hand. The Scripture is wont to ascribe knowledge unto God, to inform the world, that what kind of contentment soever men reap, or receive, by means of any knowledge of things which they have, and

Scripture asserted unto God, not because he knoweth them after the same specifical manner, or upon the same specifical terms, upon which men know or understand the things known by them, (for as “the Lord seeth not as man seeth,” 1 Sam. 16:7, so neither doth he know as man knoweth,) but because, from and by means of the infinite perfection of his nature, 1. He enjoyeth himself with a scientific contentment; (I mean, with such a kind of contentment as knowing men enjoy, or might enjoy,

upon what ground, one or more, the Scriptures attribute prescience also, or foreknowledge, unto God. For look what regular conveniency, opportunity, or advantage in any kind, the foreknowledge of things in men affordeth unto them, the like doth the infinite perfection of the Divine nature exhibit and afford unto him. Men who have the certain foreknowledge that such and such things will come to pass at such or such a time, if they any ways relate unto them, or be capable of being wrought to such a

a manner, that the things foreknown, when they come to pass, shall come to pass with more conveniency or advantage unto them, than otherwise they could. have done. Upon such considerations as these, the foreknowledge of things, yea of all things that are future, is by the Scriptures ascribed unto God; viz. because through the infinite perfection of his essence and being, he, 1. Enjoys a delight or contentment answerable to that of foreknowing men, by means of this their knowledge. 2. He is able to

impart beforehand at what distance of time he pleaseth, either to his saints (his friends) or others, such particularities of what is hid in the womb of time, as himself judgeth meet to be upon such terms as these revealed; 3, and lastly, He is able also providentially to dispose of all such things to the best advantage, both for his own glory, and the benefit of those who shall be found worthy of this great interest in him.

From the rule that hath been given, and the explication made according

thereunto, for a right understanding how and in what sense, and upon what grounds, both knowledge and foreknowledge are in Scripture transferred unto God, a clear light shineth whereby to discover how, and upon what grounds also, desires, purposes, intentions, or decrees in one kind or other, are by the same authority vested in God, as likewise how they differ both from his knowledge and foreknowledge. That desires, intentions, purposes, and decrees, as well as knowledge, or

unto these affections or impressions in men, which are attributed unto God, should be paralleled in him, or have something in his nature corresponding to them.

It is a sufficient ground or reason for the attribution, if the human affection, or impression attributed unto him, be in respect of any one particular appertaining to it in men, paralleled or analogised in the nature of God; the proverbial maxim well admonishing, that similitudes are not wont to run on all four," no, nor always on three, nor yet on

perfection of his simple essence, or nature, he doth anything upon occasion, which is proper or frequent, for men being angry, to do; as that he sharply expostulates, or reproves, that he smites those who provoke him, with any severe stroke of judgment, or the like, &c. So again, expectation in men is always attended with an apprehension that the thing expected will indeed come to pass; no man expecting that which he knows certainly will never come to pass; yet it doth not follow from hence,

purposed or intended shall or will be effected; no man ever intending or purposing that, which he certainly knows beforehand never shall or will be effected. But it doth not follow from hence, that when purposes or intentions are attributed unto God, they must needs be thus attended; I mean, with a supposition or expectance, that the things said to be purposed or intended by him shall or will come to pass. Therefore that saying of Mr. Rutherford, Exercit. p. 224. “Tenentur omnes

credere Deum
omnipotentem sua
intentione excidere non
posse,” *i. e.* All men are
bound to believe, that God
being omnipotent, cannot
fail of his intention, is less
considerate, yea, and
defective in truth, without
the help of some further
explication. If instead of
intention, he had said
decree, thus: all men are
bound to believe, that God,
being omnipotent, cannot
fail or fall short in any
decree, so as not to be able
to put it in execution,
reason and truth had
greeted each other in. such

a saying. But God may he said, as we shall see further anon, to purpose or intend things, in case he affordeth means that are proper and sufficient to bring them to pass, especially if he commands them to be used accordingly; this being a dispensation of like consideration and nature with the deportment of men, who are wont to provide a sufficiency of means, at least so apprehended by them, for the effecting of what they purpose or intend. So that to reason thus: God intendeth not the salvation

Yet before we can conveniently come at our intended explication., how and in what respect, or sense, desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees, are by Scripture assignment transferred upon God, necessary it is that the difference between them in point of signification and propriety of import, together with the signification, of some other terms of near consideration with them, be examined and clearly stated. For that these words, desire, purpose, intention, and decree, do not precisely

appropriable unto, and found in men, signifies only an act of appetency in the heart or soul of a man, towards somewhat that is absent, whether in respect of simple being, or of place only, and withal apprehended by the desirer, as connatural and suitable unto him, either in respect of his own personal conveniency and accommodation only, or the accommodation also of some others whom he wisheth well unto. How it differs from the other three will plainly enough appear in the progress. Secondly,

the thing decreed, but engageth home, without any exception, reservation, or proviso whatsoever, save only that of sufficiency of strength or power for matter of execution. A desire, if it be intense, and raised to any height or strength, and the nature of the thing desired be such that the procurement of it lieth, either in whole or in part, within the power of the desirer, and withal opposeth not, in his apprehension, either the enjoyment or procurement of somewhat more desirable unto him, always

advanceth into a purpose or intention of obtaining the thing so desired. Otherwise, if it be either languishing, faint and low, or the thing desired be no ways, in no kind, attainable by anything the desirer can do; or if his engagement for the obtainment of it be conceived by him as likely to prejudice him in any other matter of greater moment; in all these cases the desire subsists within itself, and advanceth not neither into intention nor action.

Secondly, Desire, when it is boiled up to a consistency

no man, at least no considering man, that so far desireth anything as to intend or purpose the obtaining of it but that he so far engageth himself in the use of means for the procurement thereof as he judgeth reasonable and sufficient for such an attainment. If men do not advance such a proportion of means, which, in their own apprehensions at least, is sufficient to compass what they purpose or intend, it argues a vanity, or nullity rather, in their intentions. But, on the other hand, there is no

reasons and arguments of great weight to persuade and overcome him. The person sued unto standeth off, and refuseth to gratify the petitioner unless he will submit to such and such terms, which are very inconvenient and dishonourable to him. The petitioner being a man of conscience and honour, refuseth the terms, and so returns ungratified in his motion. In this case, though he might, with making a breach upon his conscience and honour, have obtained that which, he had sued for, yet his

non-obtaining it upon such terms doth no ways argue hut that he really desired it, yea, and purposed and intended the obtaining of it, if it might have been procured upon meet and honourable terms. Many cases of like consideration might be put.

Thirdly and lastly, To decree, (in the strict and formal signification of the word, for otherwise purposes and decrees sometimes interchange significations,) importeth such an act of the mind and will of a man whereby he doth not simply or only

purpose or intend the effecting of what he desireth, but this upon such terms, with such strength of intention and resolution, that it carrieth Him against and above all possible intervention of any dissuasive circumstance whatsoever, one or more, to the effecting thereof. So that a purpose or intention and a decree, in strictness of notion respectively, may be distinguished by their objects thus: A purpose or intention respecteth that which is desirable, yet not simply and absolutely desirable but upon such

may come readily and steadily to conceive and understand how and in what sense desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees are and may be ascribed unto God. First, it is considerable that desires and purposes or intentions, are never separated in God: he never desireth anything but what he purposeth or intendeth to effect. The reason is, because whatsoever he apprehendeth suitable to him and of tendency to his glory, which is the adequate object of his desire, he always interesteth himself

manage all the concernments of his glory as not to prejudice himself in any, in or by the prosecution of others. But,

Secondly, Though desires and purposes, or intentions, cannot be separated in God, yet intentions or purposes, and decrees, may. God doth not always decree the effecting of what he purposeth or intendeth to effect, though he always purposeth and intendeth to effect what he decreeth. The reason why he doth not always decree to effect what he purposeth or intendeth to effect, is,

because he judgeth it meet to act only to a certain degree of efficiency for the effecting and obtaining of some things, by which, if he cannot effect or obtain them, he judgeth it not meet to act any further or higher in order thereunto. But because he never acteth for or towards the effecting of anything but with a due and full sufficiency of means, (the whole course and compass of his efficiency in this kind taken together,) he may well and truly be said to purpose and intend whatsoever he engageth himself to effect,

though with the lowest degree of efficiency, wherein at any time, and in reference to any end, he appeareth.

If you ask me, But what are the things in particular, or any of them, which God may be said to purpose or intend, and yet not to decree ? I answer,

1. In general: they are all such things for the procurement and effecting whereof he vouchsafeth means, and these sufficient, (for he never starveth his ends for want of means, as hath been often in effect said,) and yet the things

wont to act in order to the obtaining of things properly purposed and intended by them, and not absolutely decreed, was lately declared, viz. so far, and to such a degree of engagement as they judge convenient and meet, consideration being had of the value, worth, and consequence of the things purposed and intended by them in case they be obtained. Therefore, to conclude God's non-intendments from his non-attainments, is a reasoning of no value, and supposeth a non-difference

between his purposes or intentions and decrees; between which, notwithstanding, as hath been shown, there is a very emphatical and signal difference. The reason why God engageth not himself to the actual assecution of all things purposed and intended by him shall, God willing, be argued in due time and place.

Thirdly and lastly, God is also said to decree such and such things, because the infinite perfection of his nature and being inclineth him to act and engage himself for the effecting of

subject in hand, it will not be amiss, I suppose, to take a more perfect knowledge of what was intimated before, viz. That all the four particulars, desires, purposes, intentions, and decrees; yea, and more than these, in their respective attributions unto God, are frequently in Scripture expressed by *the will* of God. John 5:21, Christ is said to quicken whom he will, *i. e.* whom he desireth, or intendeth to quicken. See also John 6:88; 17:24. Whereas it is said, John 6:39, “And this is the Father’s *will* that

decreeing *will*, but of his purposing or desiring *will*. But of these Scriptures more hereafter. Other significations of this word will, when attributed unto or spoken of God, which are divers, besides those specified upon the present occasion, we shall not now insist upon.

For a close to this chapter, let us, from the grounds pre-asserted herein, take into consideration the difference between the knowledge, or foreknowledge of God, and the intentions, or decrees of God. Therefore (not to

equal and indifferent concernment to them, as knowing how to make the same benefit or use of the one and of the other. Whereas some other things there are, the effecting whereof, or at least the attempting and endeavouring whereof, is of special concernment unto them. Now things of this latter consideration are the object of men's desires, intentions, and decrees, and they purpose to be active about the bringing of them to pass, whereas matters of the former are the object of their

knowledge or foreknowledge only, but of his desires, intentions, and decrees also.

CHAPTER 4.

Concerning the perfection of God, in his nature and being, and some things clearly deducible from it; particularly his simplicity, actuality, and goodness in decrees.

“AND this is life eternal, that they,” or that men, “know thee the only true

God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ," saith the Lord Christ himself in that most solemn supplicatory address unto his Father, recorded John 17:3, yet not for his Father's instruction, but his children's. What knowledge of himself it is, either for kind, quality, or degree, which Jesus Christ here joineth with the knowledge of God, as, together with it, constituting and making up one entire cause or means of salvation unto the creature; or with what kind of necessity he supposeth

the conjunction of that knowledge of himself, which he intendeth, with the knowledge of God, to be necessary to that great end and purpose, as whether with an absolute, or an expediential and accumulative necessity only, we shall not for the present inquire, much less determine. This, I presume, will be granted upon demand only, without proof; that as the true knowledge of Christ doth necessarily include, or pre-suppose the like knowledge of God; so doth such a knowledge of God as

our Saviour here describes, the knowing of him to be the only true God, comprehend in it an implicit or virtual knowledge of Christ also. This might be brought into a clear light by the helping hand of the Scriptures, but that the contemplation of it is a little eccentric to our present design. However, let those who doubt consult these oracles, with their fellows, John 14:1; John 5:23; Psal. 9:10; Jer. 9:23, 24; Heb. 11:6; Rom. 1:19—21; besides many others.

But what is it to know

God, or God the Father, GREEK, “ the only true God?” First, to know God, or the Father, the only true God, may admit of a double construction, or meaning: either, 1. As if the truth of this proposition, God, or God the Father, is the only true God, were the terminus, or intended object of the knowledge here spoken of; or, 2. As if God the Father’s being the only true God were presupposed to this knowledge, and some further particulars concerning him the object hereof. The former sense

powerful, infinitely blessed, infinite in all manner of excellency and perfection, and all this in the most absolute simplicity of essence, without any plurality, multiplication, or composition in what kind, or of what things soever; and, on the other hand, that there is nothing in him, in one kind or other, in one consideration or other, which reason duly informed, and judging like itself, can think unmeet or unworthy to be found in a true God. This is to know God, or God the Father, to be a true God. 2. To know

and mediation (in which respect it is attributed unto him also,) “Enlighteneth every man that cometh” (or, as he cometh, or coming) “into the world,” John i. 9. The united light of which principles, or impressions, is said, ver. 4, to be that “life of men,” *i. e.* the means of that life of men, or the means whereby men were to attain that life, which is there said to have “been in Christ,” viz. as in a fountain of merit, or as in a designed purchaser, for them. For the meaning of the latter clause of this verse, GREEK , which our

English rendereth, “and the life was the light of men,” is, I conceive with submission, this, or to this effect, viz. that that life and salvation which Christ, in reality of design, and with semblable acceptance in the sight of God, had from the beginning purchased by his death for men, did, or doth as it were in the first break or dawning of it, appear and discover itself in those principles of natural light, reason, judgment, conscience, understanding, &c., which are found in the generality of men upon their “coming

the things of their peace, when they are proposed with the greatest evidence and power unto them. Insomuch that though the life which was in Christ is said to be “ the light of men,” yet it immediately followeth, that “ the light shineth in darkness,” (i. e. the doctrine of life and salvation is clearly preached to an ignorant world,) “ and the darkness comprehended it not,” *i. e.* that ignorance, or incapacity rather, of the things of eternal life, which men have voluntarily contracted and brought

upon themselves, is so exceeding great and strange, that they understand little or nothing of this doctrine so preached unto them. But this occasionally only, and by the way. As to the work in hand, doubtless there was never any man touched with any competent sense, or enlightened with any tolerable notion of a deity, that ever put it to the question in himself, whether God was perfect or no. “All men,” saith Aristotle, in his Metaphysics, “without any demur or delay, ascribe

that unto God which they conceive to be most perfect.” And indeed that very sense and notion of God which nature prompted! her children with, though many of them are dull of hearing in this kind, doth not admit of any tiling looked upon as defective or imperfect within the verge of it.

Therefore having so firm, and so generally-approved a foundation to build upon, as the perfection of God, let us see what it affordeth unto us by way of evident deduction, toward the advancement of our great

design, the magnifying of God in his gracious intendments of salvation unto all men, without exception, in or by the death of Christ.

First, if the nature, essence, and being of God be most perfect, then must it needs be most simple, most entirely, absolutely, and perfectly one, not admitting any plurality or composition whatsoever. The reason of this is plain, because all plurality and composition, whether of parts or of natures, suppose imperfection. For if any one of these parts or natures

conveniency, whatsoever is necessary to be done and performed by man; for then all the rest should be superfluous. They may all be perfect in their kind, *i. e.*, with a determinate and limited perfection, and in order to such or such a particular action and service, and yet one stand in need of another, as the apostle speaketh; but if any one of them were simply and absolutely perfect, *i. e.*, could do all things whatsoever upon the same terms of convenience which both itself and all the rest can do together, certainly

all the rest were needless. So if an angel could understand by his mere essence or substance of his nature, without any endowment or gift of understanding distinct therefrom; or could perform any other action, or do any execution immediately by his essence, without the intervening of those natural endowments or qualities of strength, power, activeness, &c., all these endowments and appendices to his nature and essence would be merely superfluous. The necessity which the angels

can possibly be made, which shall be able to act or work immediately by its essence, or otherwise than by the mediation of some virtue, property, or quality, in one kind or other, inherent therein; it being the glorious and incommunicable property and prerogative of the Divine essence or Being itself so to work. So then this absolute and infinite simplicity of the nature of God supposed, as without which he cannot be absolutely and infinitely perfect, it plainly followeth,
First, That all those

But therefore all this variety and diversity, both of attributes, affections, and parts, is attributed unto him, because by means of this one simple and single essence being infinitely perfect, he can, when he pleaseth, and pleaseth, when he judgeth meet, give forth himself, and act all that variety and diversity of action which these different principles are wont to produce in men. As for example; a man that hath wisdom is able to act, and doth act when he pleaseth, in a regular proportion, or due order

unto his ends. So a man that hath knowledge, whether of things past, present, or to come, being wise withal, manageth and disposeth his affairs according to the exigency of such knowledge, and with the best advantage that such knowledge affords unto him. A man that is just, doth things that are just and equal; and so he that is angry, frowns, threatens, or strikes. He that loves, doth good unto and kindly by those who are loved of him; he that hates, acts to the prejudice or hurt of the person hated

and both these at one and the same time, as hath been sufficiently explained.

Thirdly and lastly, from the simplicity of the nature of God, the truth of that common maxim in divinity, *quicquid est in Deo, Deus est*, *i. e.*, whatsoever is in God, is God, is fully demonstrable: and consequently that neither from eternity was there anything, neither for the present is there anything, nor ever shall be anything in him to eternity, inferior to himself, anything which is not God. And if so, then both the justification of

men from eternity, and so the condemnation of men from eternity, are but idle fancies, with which some men, partly through weakness, partly through inconsiderateness, commit spiritual fornication. Yea, though I will not say that any of the persons who hold either of these opinions do blaspheme, yet the opinions themselves, narrowly examined, will not be found innocent from this great offence : inasmuch as both the one and the other do apparently give the honour of the glorious God in his

before there be so much as a stone of it laid ?

To this I answer, according to the tenor of what hath been lately argued and proved concerning the simplicity of the Divine essence, that if they had any being from eternity, it could be none other than the Divine Being itself; for there were no plurality of beings from eternity. All beings without beginnings may be numbered, by the figure of one, and this unmultiplied. Therefore, if God justified any from eternity, it must be himself; if he

respective beings. There is nothing capable of receiving an existence, or actual being, but what had a potential or seminal being in some productive cause or other, one or more, before. Therefore, if this universe, with all the parts and members of it, had not been in God, as in the productive cause, doubtless they had never been produced, or received being. But

2. I answer further, by way of exception, that men, considered in that being which they had in God from eternity, were no ways

which in the winter time were virtually and seminally in one and the same root, that some of them flourished and prospered, and others were blasted or eaten up with worms, whilst they were together in the root; though, afterwards, when they come to receive actual production, and to subsist extra causas, respectively, this difference may very possibly befall them.

Yea, but were not some men justified, and others condemned, in the counsel, purpose, and decree of God, from eternity? I

God, they made none at all. This decree of God, whosoever believeth shall he justified, doth neither make, nor suppose, any one man any whit nearer, either to believing, or to justification than another: nor, on the other hand, doth this decree, he that believes not, shall be condemned, either make or suppose one man nearer, either to unbelief, or condemnation through unbelief, than another. A law that is made for the punishing of murder, or adultery, with death, relates no more, in the

more clear that such a man's condition is not perfect. For to be obnoxious to the deprivation or losing of any good, which a man enjoyeth for the present, manifestly argueth weakness and imperfection. Thirdly, and lastly, If a man be capable of being anything which yet he is not, suppose it be without any relation at all to his condition, either for the better or the worse, yet this also plainly argueth imperfection. For it supposeth that a man hath something, hath a capacity,

which is a mere superfluity to him, and doth him_no good, yea, which he knoweth not how to improve for his good.; and this, as apparently as either of the former, argueth imperfection. So that certain it is, that if the nature and being of God he absolutely and infinitely perfect, he must needs be a pure and mere act, all in present and actual being, whatsoever it is possible for him ever to be.

This most entire and complete actuality of the divine nature and being is, I presume, generally

subscribed by all reformed divines. “God,” saith Zanchie, “is a most pure and most simple act, and no ways capable or in any possibility of being anything, more or less, than what he is.” And from this actuality of God, he infers both his absolute immutability and infinity of his perfection. “It is affirmed,” saith Peter Martyr, “as with one mouth, of all that are godly, that God is not changed, inasmuch as this would be a certain sign as well of imperfection as inconstancy in him.” The

we speak of, and not by any new act, exercised or exerted by him, in order to their several and particular productions, is frequently insinuated in the Scriptures themselves: yea, and is demonstrable by ground of reason; and nothing but what hath been the judgment of several learned men, and of Augustine, by name. The context of Moses, Gen. 2:4, tenoureth thus: “These are the generations of the heavens, and of the earth, when they were created; *in the day* that the Lord made the earth and the heavens, and

beest able, that six or sevenfold repetition which is made, or to be made, without any intervals, of delays or spaces of time; or if thou beest not able so to conceive of it, leave it for those to conceive who are able; and go thou forward with the Scripture, which forsaketh not thine infirmity, but walketh a mother's pace slowly with thee; and which so speaketh, that with her height she laughs at the proud; with her depth she amazeth the considerate; with her truth, she feeds the strong or well grown;

and with her affability
nourisheth little ones." The
same author, elsewhere:
"For God," saith he, "made
all time with all corporeal
creatures, together or at
once: which visible
creatures are signified by
the name of heaven 'and
earth.'" This, to have been
his positive and clear
judgment, many other
passages in his writings
give plenary and pregnant
testimony: and more
particularly his 105th
tractate upon John, and his
books upon Genesis. But to
return to the Scriptures.
Those words, Psa. 115:3:

“He,” God, “hath done whatsoever he pleased,” in the best sense and interpretation of them, and that which is closest to the letter, are thus to be understood, viz. that whatsoever God willeth or hath willed, should at any time come to pass, he hath already done; viz. all that he meaneth, or which is any ways necessary for him to do, towards the effecting of it. In this sense, also, that of the apostle, Rom. 8:30, with many other places of Scripture of like phrase and consideration, is to be understood.

“Moreover, whom he hath predestinated, them also hath he called: and whom he hath called, them hath he also justified; and whom he hath justified, them hath he also glorified.” God is said to have, already, called, justified, glorified, all those whom he did foreknow, (ver. 29,) *i. e.* preapprove, (viz. as lovers of God, ver. 28,) and so predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, because he hath already done whatsoever is requisite for him to do, for the procurement and effecting of them in due

generally acknowledge, it could not be of any later or other edition than so. Secondly, that this act, though acted or put forth by him from eternity, is not, therefore, to be conceived as an act that is passed, or finished long since, but as permanent, and continued in him or by him, yet without any succession or continuity of time, according to that of our Saviour, “My Father *worketh hitherto*, and I work,” John 5:17. There is nothing perishable or changeable in God: what he worketh once he worketh

always, though the products or effects of his working alter and change, rise and fall. The late learned Bishop Davenant asserteth these propositions as true, in the opinion of all divines: 1. That God can will nothing in time. If so, then that will of his, by which the world was at first created, and by which all things are in continuance and succession of time produced, must needs be from or in eternity. 2. That God cannot but have that will which he hath. If so, then that will, by which he

created the world, and gave being unto all things that were to receive being in time, is unchangeably permanent in him. 3. And, lastly, That God cannot have any will which for the present he hath not. If so, then that will of his, by which he operateth or worketh faith in Peter, in time, as for instance to-day, was in him from eternity; and, consequently, God wrought as much towards the making of Peter a believer, before he did believe, as he did when he was actually brought to believe.

by which he became or was made a believer. The reason hereof is, because there is no succession, nothing sooner, nothing later, nothing before, nothing after other in order of time, in eternity, nor yet in those things which are measured by eternity, as by their proper and adequate measure, as all the acts of God are. This is the constant and known doctrine of the ablest and best divines, as well modern as more ancient. The priority or precedency which the act of God hath before the act of Peter, by

the mutual coincidence or joint concurrence whereof Peter is made a believer, is only a priority in worth, dignity, excellency, eminency, &c., not in time. God doth not will the conversion of Peter before he is converted, nor the glorification of Peter before he be glorified, though he willed, or rather willeth, both the one and the other from eternity. The reason of the seeming strangeness of these things to our apprehensions is, our ignorance and unacquaintedness with the nature of eternity, which

was not in order of time before that act of Peter himself whereby he believed, but only in a kind of transcendent excellency or dignity, proper to eternity, is nothing but the avouched doctrine of many learned and judicious men; yea, and clearly follows from the very nature of eternity, as it is generally defined and described by our reformed divines themselves, yea, even those that are esteemed most orthodox. “But if,” saith Austin, speaking unto God, “there was no time before heaven and earth, why do

that of Paul, Eph. 1:4, ‘He chose us in him before the world was made,’ with many other like places of Scripture, everywhere obvious, are to be taken according to the manner of our understandings, as meant of this eminential priority, not of an antecedency in respect of time, not of any priority properly and formally so called.” The same author elsewhere hath these words: “Inasmuch as the proper and formal reason,” or nature, “of mutability, wherein the ratio” or nature “of time consisteth,

in hand: no act of God is before any act of the creature in respect of time. The fourth, and last thing of like necessity to be considered for the same end is this: No act of God, nor co-operation of his with his creature, imposeth any necessity upon any free-working cause (I mean upon any cause which is free in the nature or constitution of it to work, or not to "work, and to work variously) to act so, or so, determinately; nor yet supposeth any necessity or infallibility of any act or effect producible by such

causes, before, or until they be actually produced. Nor is this anything but the received doctrine of orthodox and approved divines. “God,” saith Austin, “so administereth, or governeth all things which he hath created, that he suffereth them to exercise and act their own proper motions.” This saying of Austin is frequently cited and made use of by our best reformed divines, as P. Martyr, Polanus, and others, in their explications of the providence of God, and the manner of his concurrence

purpose, and in the same tract where the recited passage is extant, writeth thus :—“ For as, although in eternity, there is nothing which was, and is now past; or that shall be hereafter, but only that which is, and yet in time something hath been, and something shall be, without any repugnancy: so may it be proved without any inconvenience, that what cannot be changed or altered in eternity, may yet in time, before the being of it, be changed or altered, by the liberty of the wills of men. Though there be

God in suspending or withdrawing his grace from him, at liberty whether he would have proceeded to the actual betraying of him or no ? “The Jews,” saith Gaudentius, an author much more ancient than the former, “ were willing to do the evil which they did. And certainly, had they been unwilling, they had not done it. Doubtless it is no less than high sacrilege so much as once to think that God who is not only good and just, but goodness and justice itself, should either command or constrain that to be done

nothing” (in its course.) “So things, though in respect of their natures they incline indifferently to either side, yet they are by God bowed” (or brought over) “more” (or rather) “unto one.” It is clear from the instance which he immediately subjoins, that he here speaketh of the wills of men; and, consequently, that the import of the passage cited is, that God acts no further, no otherwise towards the determination of the wills of men, but only by swaying, or inclining them more, or rather, to the one

should not be effected; and this not only in respect of his liberty, whether he will go through with the work and effect it or no, but in respect of the liberty of the will itself, whether it will be persuaded to a change or no. But concerning the uselessness of exhortations, &c., in case conversion be wrought by an irresistible or necessitating hand, we shall have occasion to speak more at large hereafter. To the point in hand, Polanus, another reformed divine, as orthodox by repute as Mr. Calvin himself, prefixes this

title to his fifth thesis in the sixth chapter of his Symphony. “God so worketh by the means of nature, that he worketh nothing contrary to their nature: and therefore the providence of God constraineth not the will of the creature.” The nature of the will is to work, I mean to assent and dissent freely, contingently, and without any necessitation, either from within or from without. Therefore, if God worketh nothing contrary to the nature of the will, the will still consents unto him upon such terms that she is

at liberty to dissent, anything that he worketh to procure this consent notwithstanding. Besides, if God worketh nothing contrary to the nature of second causes, then he must needs, according to the common expression of divines, as with necessary causes, work necessarily, so with contingent causes work contingently. Take the acknowledgment of the same truth from Ursine also, another late writer, no less orthodox than the two former. "The will of man," saith he, "even moved of God, is able not only to

determinately, under the movings and actings of God, than this author hath done in the words presented. He that saith, “the will moved by God is able not only to resist, but also to obey God in his motion,” doubtless meaneth, or supposeth, that the will is able to resist him in or under those very motions, under which, and by means whereof, she is able also to consent unto him and obey him. Besides, saying that the will receives *power* of assenting and obeying from the grace of the Holy Ghost, doth he not

receives from the grace of the Holy Ghost not only a power of consenting, and obeying God in his gracious movings, but, sensu sano, these actings themselves. But of this hereafter. It is, I suppose, needless, and would be more tedious than difficult, to make the pile of "testimonies from our best and most approved authors, for the confirmation of the truth last asserted, any whit greater. He that is afraid to believe the truth, unless he hath an arm of flesh to encourage him, may find many more quotations

discourse, be further evicted and confirmed by dint of argument and demonstration. In the meantime my request to him, that shall, haply, undertake to answer these discussions, is, that he will not needlessly trouble either himself, his reader, or me with producing the authors lately either named or referenced, or any others, as asserting the contrary to what I have argued and proved from them in other places; for I can more willingly grant than question that they have many inconsistencies,

in other parts of their writings, with those things which I quoted for them. So that for any man to quote them in oppositum, is to gain nothing to their cause but what is already granted to their hand; only it may prove the easing of the truth from the burthensomeness of their authority in other points, inasmuch as the speaking of contradictions is a plain confession of our ignorance or doubtfulness, at least, of the truth.

We have now done with those four cautions so necessary, as was said, for

by the creature, because he himself is unchangeable.” Not long after he inquires further about the same point, thus: “Or whether doth not this belong to the nature of that word of his, of which it is said, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the “Word was God.’ For when it is said of him, ‘All things were made by him,’ it is evident enough that the light also was made by him, when God said, ‘Let there be light which if so, that which God said, ‘Let there be light,’ is eternal, (or from

eternity,) because the Word of God, God with God, the only Son of God, is co-eternal with the Father, although God speaking in (or by) his eternal Word, the creature was made in time.” From this piece of discourse, these three things are evident: 1. That the author’s judgment was, that God did not give being unto things, by any multiplied or distinct acts or workings, but by one and the same most simple word, the efficacy and force whereof extendeth itself to the production of all particular creatures or

beings, when, and at what time or times, the speaker pleaseth. 2. That this word was not spoken by him in time, but in or from eternity. 3, and lastly, That notwithstanding the word was spoken from eternity, yet the effects or productions of it received their respective beings in time. The same author, in the progress of the same tractate, relating, as it seems, to the last-recited words, demandeth thus (upon occasion of Moses' reducing the works of creation to one day, Gen. 2:4, whereas in the former

chapter he had digested them into six), “Is not this that which we endeavoured to show in a former book, that God *made all things together*, or at once?” And presently after, glancing by the way at those words (as the Latin translation readeth them), “He that liveth forever hath created all things together,” Eccles. 18:1, he plainly affirmeth, that the reason of this expression, “In the day that the Lord created heaven and earth,” &c. Gen. 2:4, “was, that we might understand how that this day was seven times

repeated,” (or mentioned before) “that so seven days might be made up.” To save the labour of transcribing, the reader may please to peruse from the same pen another testimony, as full and pregnant to the point in hand as any of these in the sixteenth section of this chapter. So that Augustine was grounded, and strongly built upon this foundation of truth, that no multiplication of effects argueth any plurality or multiplication of acts or exertions in God, in or for the productions of them.

Let the judicious reader

supposeth that God by one and the same simple act, which is really the same with his essence or being, giveth being to all things whatsoever, that either have been, are, or shall be hereafter. D'Arriba, an author formerly mentioned, as one that profited more than many of his fellows in the learning of the fathers and schoolmen, is more clear and distinct in the business than any of the former; yea, and asserts the opinion now contended for, as confessed with one mouth by all divines. "Secondly,"

in which they receive the beginnings” (or first) “of their beings by a true creation, yet the act of the Divine will, or the command or decree of God, by virtue whereof things are created, and begin to be, are not therefore multiplied, or distinguished between themselves.” This supposition of his he further explains and argues in that which follows. It were easy to multiply testimonies from this author, yea, and not hard to do the like from many others, of more credit haply

than this, for the confirmation and countenance of the matter in hand. But for authorities I shall conclude, with that confident though brief assertion of an approved author of our own, formerly touched. “For in all divines’ opinions,” saith the late Bishop Davenant, “these propositions are true; God can will nothing in time; God cannot but have the will, which he hath; he cannot have any will which he hath not.” If God can will nothing in time, nor have any will which he hath not, then must needs that

act of his will, by which he gives being unto all things, be from eternity: nor doth anything which is produced, or receiveth being in time, receive this being, by virtue of any presentaneous, or new act of the Divine interposal or concurrence, other than that which was exercised and put forth by him from eternity.

Give me now leave to add a reason or two, briefly, for the further clearing and asserting of this doctrine. First, it is a known maxim in reason, that everything must needs act in

proportion, or according to the manner of the being of it. Now the being of God being most absolutely perfect, the manner of his acting or working must needs be most perfect also. So then all repetition, or multiplication of actings in the creature, for the obtaining of such ends which it desireth, arguing imperfection, (a principle upon which the apostle himself builds, Heb. 10:1—3: “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of them, can never, with those sacrifices

before or after other. Together and at the same instant they could not be raised; it being repugnant to a cause that is most singly, simply, and indivisibly one, without all manner of composition of parts, or otherwise, as God or the divine essence is, to exercise a plurality of acts together, especially really distinct, and differing one from another as the acts we speak of, in case they were supposeable in God, must needs be.

If any man shall yet demandingly object, But how can these things be?

several ends to pass; so doth it argue nothing but pure and mere perfection that God, by one act or word speaking, should bring forth a world of such and such a duration, so furnished in all respects, in every part of this duration of it, as seemed best suited to himself, with creatures, motions, actions, and events of all kinds.

2. To aid and ease our imaginations a little, in conceiving the manner how that great wonder we speak of may be, Augustine, I remember, somewhere in his writings, findeth a kind

other in the second, &c. In like manner God, by one and the same eternal act, eternally permanent in him, may express and utter himself unto the world by the producing of such and such things in every kind, according to all variety of times and seasons as himself pleaseth.

This for answer to that great and difficult objection against the perfect actuality of God, raised from the successive production of things by him.

Another objection seeming to war against the same property and

surprisal, this he did, viz., through temptation, or being prevented with human infirmity.

2. God is said, and truly, to be *agens liberrimum*, the most free agent of all others, 1. In respect of the exercise of his act, or execution of what he willeth; he is obnoxious to no disappointment in what he willeth to effect, by any wisdom or power whatsoever; whereas all other agents are hable, in what they intend to put in execution, to suffer a check and failure from him. 2. He is the most free agent, in

only supposeth or demonstrateth it to be another kind of liberty or freedom, much more excellent and perfect than that which is found in the wills of men or angels. That liberty of will which is competent unto, and found in these, includes a peccability or potentiality unto sin, which argueth weakness or non-perfection; whereas the unchangeable rectitude of the will of God, excluding all possibility of sinning, excludeth no degree at all of liberty or freedom from it, but only

weakness, imperfection, and defectibility, which are the indelible characters of created wills.

Having thus cleared this foundation of truth, the perfect actuality of the Divine essence or being, let us consider what we may safely, and with evidence of deduction, build upon it. If then God be a pure and mere act, without all potentiality or possibility of change, in one kind or other, then those volitions or acts of his will, which, with the Scriptures, we call election, reprobation, predestination, &c., are not

to be conceived as acts that are past, or like to the volitions, purposes, or intentions of men, which, being once fulfilled and put in execution, die and cease to be in them; but are to be looked upon as being really and in truth one and the same thing with His essence and being, which is unchangeably permanent, only with relation to the effecting of such things in time which answer and hold proportion with the actings of men, when, they elect, reprobate, or predestinate. So that, for example, when Goa.

body,” saith he, “and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself” GREEK, “ should be ” (or rather become, or be made) a “ cast-away,” or reprobate, 1 Cor. 9:27, as the word in the original properly signifieth, and is elsewhere so translated, Rom. 1: 28 ; 2 Cor. 13:5—7; 2 Tim. 3:8; Tit. 1:16.

Nor doth that expression of Paul concerning God’s choosing men in Christ before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1:4, import any act in God that is past, and now ceaseth to be in

him, but only the standing counsel and good pleasure, which is eternal in him, being nothing else but himself and his Divine essence, of giving life and salvation unto all those who believe in Jesus Christ, by the means which he graciously purposeth also to vouchsafe unto them, and accordingly vouchsafeth for this end. The reason why the Scriptures usually express the acts of God which axe eternally permanent in him, by verbs of the preterperfect tense, and in phrases importing time

past, is, as Anselm long since well observed, because there being no words used, or known amongst men, which signify that kind of permanency or presence which is proper to eternity, words signifying the time past, are taken up by the Holy Ghost to express matters of that consideration and import rather than others, which signify either the time present or to come, because that which is past, being unchangeably past, and in no possibility of being any other than past, holds

change made in the creature. The Scripture saith expressly of God, that “He hateth all workers of iniquity,” Psal. 5:5. Therefore, whilst Peter was a worker of iniquity, most certain it is that God hated him. But upon this Peter’s conversion, it must be supposed that God laid, aside his affection of hatred towards him, and put on the affection of love instead thereof, which imports a palpable and plain change in him.

If it be said, that such an election as I plead for, viz., of men under a specifical

that should at any time rise up in this species. According to this notion of election, it argues no mutability or change at all in God, either in respect of his love or hatred, that one while he loves, and another while hates one and the same person; because it supposeth no person of men to be any otherwise, or in any other consideration, the object of his election or of his elective love, but only as righteous; nor any person of men the object of his reprobation or reprobating hatred, but only as wicked or ungodly.

As it argueth no change or alteration in the heavens, or in the climates thereof, that a man removing himself by travel out of a cold climate where he felt the inconvenience of cold into a hot, partakes here of the accommodation of warmth, it only argues a change in the man in respect of his residence and place ; so neither doth it argue any change at all in God, nor of any affection in him, in case a man passing from sin, where he lived under the hatred and displeasure of God, unto righteousness, enjoys in

this condition the love and favour of God. This only imports a change in such a man, but no change at all in God or in any affection of his. He now loves, but where and what he loved before, and hates still, as before he hated. Nor doth this notion or doctrine of election and reprobation any ways suppose, either righteousness to be the cause of the former, or sin of the latter, as opportunity may be given in the process of the discourse more fully to show.

Thirdly, If the actuality of God, or the Divine Essence,

righteousness unto sin,
from innocency unto
transgression. In which
case God may be said to
hate them, though he loved
them formerly, without the
least shadow of a change,
either in himself or in his
affection, as was lately
proved.

Fourthly, and lastly, From
that complete actuality of
the Divine Essence, which
hath been argued and
asserted, it plainly follows,
that all God's counsels,
purposes, and decrees are
absolute, unchangeable,
irreversible, upon any
terms, suppositions, or

toties quoties in execution:
If men believe, they shall be
saved. There is the same
reason of all others, which
are of like tenor and frame.
And thus, from the
perfection of the Divine
nature, we have evinced, 1.
The simplicity thereof: 2.
The most pure and absolute
actuality thereof; and from
both these, in a way of
lawful, clear, and evident
deduction, inferred several
considerations and
conclusions for the support
and strengthening of our
main building in this
discourse: we have only one
thing further to argue, from

the infinite perfection of
the nature of God.
Therefore,

Thirdly, and lastly, If God
in his nature and essence
be absolutely and infinitely
perfect, then can he act
nothing, order, decree
nothing, to the prejudice or
hurt of any creature
whatsoever, but only in a
way of righteousness and
equity, *i. e.* upon the
consideration of some
demerit or sin preceding.
For not only to act, but to
be able to act,
unrighteously, or to intend
evil, to or against the
innocent, argues

imperfection, and that in a very high degree. Because, as Job reasoneth and demandeth on the one hand, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" and concludeth, "not one," Job 14:4; so may we on the other, who can bring an unclean thing out of that which is perfectly clean ? surely not one. If the nature of God be infinitely perfect, there can be nothing in it, there can nothing proceed from it, or be done by it that is unjust, nothing unequal, nothing hard, nothing that any ways bendeth or inclineth to the

impenitency; I will allure them to repentance with all my great and precious promises of pardon of sin, of life, and glory, and all the great things of the world to come; yea, I will most seriously and solemnly protest and swear unto them, by the greatest oath that is, even by my own life and being, that " I desire not their death," Ezek. 33:11. Can men indued with reason and understanding, or that know in the least what belongeth to matters of honour and glory, resent or savour anything in such proceedings as these, that

non-observation of this law, to be the law of condemnation and of death. God here interposeth with his prerogative, and declares to them that his will and pleasure is otherwise, and that he constitutes and ordains faith in his Son Jesus Christ, to be the law of justification and life, whether joined with the observation of Moses's law or without it; and on the other hand, unbelief to be the law of condemnation and of death, though-in conjunction with the strictest observation of

himself as it was, might very well, had they not been negligent or willingly blind, have been apprehended and submitted unto by them, as a way and means of justification far more rational, more full of wisdom, and equity, and every ways more honourable unto and better becoming God, than that way and method of their imagination, I mean by the observation of Moses's law.

3. Though it be not to be denied, but that God hath an absolute sovereignty and lordship over his creature, *i.e.* a lawful power to

dispose of it as he pleaseth,
yet it is an horrible
indignity and affront put
upon him, and no less than
a constructive denial of his
infinite grace, goodness,
mercy, bounty, love, &c., to
affirm that he exerciseth or
administereth this
sovereignty and power
upon the hardest terms,
and most grievous unto his
creature that can lightly be
imagined, yea and no ways
conducing unto his own
glory ; which,
notwithstanding, they
affirm, in effect, who
maintain that: from
eternity he left, or purposed

believe, being capable through years of believing, and otherwise competently rational, unto destruction. Such a predestination of men from eternity as this the Scriptures clearly and frequently hold forth; yea, those that are contrary minded in the present controversies, subscribe hereunto: and without controversy such a predestination as this is fairly and fully consistent with the glory of his wisdom, and highly commends and magnifies either all or the greatest part of his attributes,

without the least
disparagement or
obscuration unto any.
Whereas that doomfull
preterition, that blood
which many wring out of
the Scriptures instead of
milk, hath no rational or
intelligible comport at all
with any of them, but casts
a kind of spirit of obscurity
and contristation upon
them all. Nor did any of
those, I verily believe, who
have been the rigidest and
most confident assertors of
it, ever so much as
undertake to show how, or
wherein, it gratifieth or
complieth with any of

evil and unjust ones on whom he maketh his sun to rise, and sendeth rain, it must be supposed withal, that he intends the greatest evil unto them that can be imagined, even whilst he doth these good things Unto them. If so, then must they who imitate him in such ways be the most accursed hypocrites and dissemblers under heaven; making show of love and kindness in their outward deportments, whilst war and blood are in their hearts, towards men; yea, and doing good unto them, with a purpose and desire

of bringing so much the greater evil and destruction upon them thereby. But the Scripture everywhere abounds in giving testimony to the love and goodness of God towards all his creatures. The apostle Peter styleth him, a faithful Creator, and willeth Christians to commit their souls unto him in well doing, 1 Pet. 4. ult., upon that account, viz., as one, or as a God, that would faithfully perform and discharge the relation of a Creator unto them. In calling him a faithful Creator, he clearly

this to comfort us, or to relieve our faith concerning thy love to us, or care for us? Do we not know that thou art a Creator to many thousand thousands in the world, whom notwithstanding thou hatest, and castedst out of thy love without any cause given on their parts, from eternity? Therefore what assurance of grace and favour with thee can we receive upon any such account as this, that thou art our Maker and Creator? So that evident it is, that God himself doth acknowledge a gracious tie

and engagement upon him, as a Creator, to love, respect, and take care for his creatures, until they voluntarily renounce and disclaim their relation unto him, as his creatures, by walking rebelliously against him, or suffering the god of this world to deface the glory of his workmanship in them. And whereas he compareth himself in tenderness and care over his creature, unto a hen, which gathereth her chickens under her wings, they who make him like unto the ostrich, which leaveth her eggs in the

earth, and. forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beasts may break them, and is hardened against her young ones, as if they were not hers, Job 39:14, 15, (which astorgy God himself imputeth to want of wisdom and understanding in her,) have the greater sin, representing him altogether unlike unto himself.

Other scriptures there are exceeding many, which testify aloud the grace, and love, and goodness of God, as a Creator, towards his creatures. “The Lord,” saith

David, “is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works,” Psal. 145:9; *erga omnia opera ejus*, as Piscator; *i. e.* are extended and shown unto all his creatures. But had he intended from eternity to abandon the far greatest part of the best of his works, men, to the vengeance of eternal fire, could his tender mercies, in any tolerable sense, he said to be over these? Especially, can those men justify David in such a saying as this, who conceive and teach that whatsoever God doth in a providential way for

such men so abandoned, as in causing his sun to rise or his rain to fall upon them, in filling their hearts with food and gladness, in giving them health, wealth, liberty, peace, &c. he doth all with an intent to harden them, and so to bring that heavy destruction upon them with the more severity and terror in the end, whereunto they were predestinated and appointed from the beginning? Will men call health, peace, liberty, meats, drinks, &c., given with an intent to become snares unto men, and to

bring inevitable damnation upon them, the tender mercies of God? The holy man Job, being conscious to himself of no signal departure from God by unrighteousness in any kind, looked upon that dispensation of God in so severely afflicting him, as very strange, and that only upon this account, that he was his Creator. “Thy hands have made me, and fashioned me together round about,” meaning, that he was the sole author of being unto him, “yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee,

offended or provoked him in the least? The same author doth elsewhere also notably assert the universal love, care, and respects of God as a Creator towards men, alleging the consideration of these, as a grand engagement upon him to deal justly and equally with his servants. “If I did despise the cause of my man servant, or of my maid servant, when they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him ? Did not he that made me in the womb,

broadly and wholly inconsistent with that love, tenderness, and respect which the relation of a Creator to a creature everywhere imports; and consequently is not to be looked upon as any prerogative worthy of him.

CHAPTER 5.

Four several veins or correspondences of Scriptures propounded, holding forth the death of Christ for all men, without exception of any. The first

of these argued.

THE premises considered, methinks it is one of the strangest and most importune sayings that, to my remembrance, I ever met with from the pen of a learned and considerate man, which I find in the writings of a late opposer of universal atonement. “I know,” saith he, “no article of the gospel which this new and wicked religion of universal atonement doth not contradict.” That which he calls a “new and wicked religion,” the doctrine of

dialect is, I mean, no great or weighty point of the Christian faith, can stand with a rational consistency unless the doctrine of universal atonement be admitted for a truth. Yea, upon a diligent and strict inquiry it will be found, that, if any man holds such a limited redemption as is commonly taught and believed amongst us, and yet withal lives holily and like a Christian, he acts in full contradiction to such a principle, and happily denies that in practice which erroneously he holds in judgment. God, in such

cases as these, makes grapes to grow on thorns, and figs on thistles; nor doth there want anything but sense and visibility of the disproportion between the cause and the effect, to make the lives and ways of such persons miraculous. Neither doth anything nor all things that I could ever yet meet with, either from the tongues or pens of the greatest patrons of particular redemption, deliver me from under much admiration, that conscientious and learned men, professing subjection of judgment to the

examination, will be found either to have no consistency with the sound principles either of reason or religion, or else no legitimate coherence with the cause which they pretend unto. Let us first hearken unto the Scriptures lifting up their voices together for the redemption of all men by Christ without exception: we shall afterwards, in due process of discourse, give a fair consideration to those inferences and consequences of men wherein the strength of their Scripture proofs

them, we shall add, to make full measure, the contributions of some single texts besides.

The first division or squadron of Scriptures which speak aloud the universality of redemption by Christ, are such which present the gift and sacrifice of Christ as relating indifferently unto the world. The name of this kind of Scriptures, for the number of them, may be Legion, for they are many. Some of the principal and best known of them are these: “God so loved *the world*, that he gave his

12:48. “For God was in Christ reconciling the *world* unto himself,” &c., 2 Cor. 5:19. To omit many others.

The second post of Scriptures standing up to maintain the same doctrine with uniformity of expressions amongst themselves, are such which insure the ransom of Christ, and the will or desire of God for matters of salvation, unto *all men* and *every man*. Some of these are—“Who gave himself a ransom for *all*,” 1 Tim. 2:6. “Because we thus judge, that if one died for *all*, then

were all dead; and that he died *for all*, that they who live,” &c., 2 Cor. 5: 14, 15. “That he, by the grace of God, should taste of death *for every man*,” Heb. 2:9 ; “who will have *all men* to be saved,” &c., 1 Tim. 2:4; “not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance,” 2 Pet. 3: 9. “Therefore, as by the offence of one the judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to the justification of life,” Rom. 5:18; with some

others.

A third sort or party of Scriptures, confederate with the former, (for substance of import, and between themselves for matter of expression,) are such which hold forth and promise salvation indifferently to him, and to whosoever will or shall believe. Of this sort are these, with their fellows: “And *him* that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out,” John 6:37; “*He* that believeth in me shall never thirst,” ver. 35; “*He* that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved,” Mark 16:16;

perish, yea, and actually do perish: and again, where such men are said to have been bought by him, and to have been “ sanctified by his blood,” who yet through their own negligence and wilfulness in sinning, bring destruction upon themselves, and perish everlastingly. Places of this kind are famously known. “Destroy not him with thy meat, *for whom Christ died,*” Rom. 14:15; “And through thy knowledge shall the weak *brother perish, for whom Christ died?*” 1 Cor. 8: 11; —“ Even denying the Lord that

bought them, and bring upon themselves swift *destruction*,” 2 Pet. 2:1 ; “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning,” 2 Pet. 2:20; “ Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an

unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Heb. 10:29; "Then his lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me. Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your heart forgive not everyone his brother their

the world, in and according to their successive generations,) and not for any lesser or smaller number, as for some of all sorts, for the elect, for those that shall believe, or the like. We shall, for brevity's sake, argue only some of these places, and leave the light of their interpretations for a discovery of the sense and meaning of the rest.

The first proposed of these, was that place of renown, "God so loved the world, that he gave," &c. John 3:16. Evident it is from hence, that Christ was given, viz. unto death for

an intent to be by him in time, with a strong hand and power irresistible, 1. Brought to believe; 2. Caused, or made to persevere believing unto the end; and, 3.

Hereupon eternally saved, the residue of men being absolutely rejected, and left to that unavoidable and heavy doom of perishing everlastingly. But that this is not the sense of the word world in the Scripture in hand, will appear by the light of these considerations.

1. The word [GREEK WORD], here translated

yet are here laid down as the two only, or at least as two main ends of that great gift. For if exemption from perishing, or salvation, be absolutely, and without all consideration, awarded or decreed by God unto men before, or from eternity, they have a full right and title unto them, or unto the possession and enjoyment of them, by virtue of this award or decree, without the intervening of anything else whatsoever. For what better right or title can there be to the enjoyment of anything than a decree of heaven ? or the award of

themselves. Read we then the place thus, "So God loved his elect, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever." —I demand how, or in what regular sense, that universal distributive article, whosoever, or GREEK, everyone that, shall be understood? It is a thing generally known to those that understand anything in the rules of grammar, yea, the vulgar dialect of those that speak reason or common sense confirmeth it, that partitive or distributive particles of speech always suppose a

at no hand endure that sense of the word world, against which we have declared hitherto. This little word for, “ *For* God so loved,” &c., being causal, importeth not only a connexion of these words with what went before, but such a connexion or relation as that which intercedes between the cause and the effect. So that the words in hand must be looked upon as assigning or exhibiting the cause or reason of that effect, which was immediately before mentioned. This being granted, as without breach

he believed or not, neither would it be there for him, though or in case he should believe.

6, and lastly. That by the word world, in the Scripture in hand, is not meant the elect, nor any thing equivalent hereunto, is evident also from the context in the verse and words immediately following, where our Saviour goeth forward in his doctrine, thus: “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved,” John 3:17. This

those, whom out of his infinite love he had from eternity decreed to save with a strong hand, outstretched arm, and power omnipotent and invincible ? Or are not these the elect, in their notion of election, with whom we have now to do ? Therefore certainly, the world, in the Scripture before us, doth not signify the elect.

A second interpretation of this word asserted by some, is, that by the world is meant genus humanum, or mankind indefinitely considered, *i. e.*, if I rightly understand the mind of

viz., Jews. But that this interpretation either falls in, in substance, with the former, and so is already condemned with the condemnation thereof; or else, with the third and last, which, as we shall hear presently, findeth in this Scripture a love in God towards all the individual persons of mankind, without exception of any; or else, that it vanisheth into nothing, and hath no substance at all in it, may he thus demonstrated. If by mankind, indefinitely considered, be neither meant a special or

or fits the interpretation of the word world, for the illustration or confirmation whereof it is brought. But the plain meaning of the Jews saying that the Centurion loved their nation, was this, that he was ready and willing to do any office or service of love to any person or persons of their nation, because of their national relation, rather than to any other, upon such a consideration, when he had opportunity. The two pretenders being nonsuited, a sufficient way, I presume, is made for the admission of the right heir.

Therefore,

The third, and last, interpretation of the world, in the Scripture under debate, is, that by it is signified universum genus humanum, the whole compass of mankind, or all and every individual person subsisting at any time in the human nature, without exception of any. This exposition stands with the ordinary and best known, signification of the words, and withal gives smoothness and regularity of construction unto the period or sentence, which both the former (as upon

examination hath been found) take from it, is of perfect accord with the context, and besides magnifies the love of God in the freeness, fulness, and extent of it incomparably above and beyond either of them; for,

1. The word world, GREEK, very frequently and familiarly both in the Scriptures themselves, and in other authors, signifieth the generality of mankind, or of men: in the Scriptures especially, when it relates unto persons, it seldom or never signifieth anything else, but either the

the world,” John 17:6. “God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?” Rom. 3:6. “As by one man sin entered into the world,” Rom. 5:12. “But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, and the weak things of the world,” 1 Cor. 1:27. “There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world,” 1 Cor. 14:10. The word being never used in the Scripture for the elect or godly party in the world, considered by themselves, or apart from others, but either for the wicked of the world alone, or apart by

themselves, or else for both godly and wicked taken together, and as mixed one with another, it were very strange that our Saviour should use it in that by sense, and unheard of elsewhere, in so eminent a place and passage of the gospel as that in hand, and not in the familiar and best known signification of it.

2. This interpretation of the word accommodates the whole verse or sentence with clearness of sense and regularity of construction, as is evident unto those who understand what the one and what the other of

sense or regularity of syntax.

3. This exposition of the word world, makes a clean joint, a rational and pleasant coherence, between this verse and that which follows; as also between this and the two verses immediately precedent. The words of the two preceding verses are these, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Now, certain it is, that Moses did

serpents, did look up unto it, should be healed thereby. This is evident from the story. “Make thee,” saith God to Moses, “a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that *every one that is bitten*, when He looketh upon it, shall live,” Numb. 11:8. Now, then, all men without exception being stung with that fiery serpent, sin, unless Christ should be lifted up upon the cross, with an intent on God’s part and in himself;

1. That every man, without exception, might believe in him; and
2. That every man

loved the world, that, &c. Therefore, by the world, he must needs mean all mankind, or the generality of men, that were bitten or stung with sin, unless we will say, that God gave his Son for the salvation of those whom he loved not.

The tenor of the following verse is this, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but,” &c. In these words our Saviour confirms his former assertion, touching the love of God to the world, in giving his Son for the salvation of it, by rejecting that reason or

needs be the true interpretation thereof.

By the way, when Christ saith, “ For judgment I am come into this world,” &c., John 9:39, He no ways opposeth what he Here saith, viz. “ That God sent him not into the world to condemn the world.” For in the former place, he speaks not of the intent, but of the event; in this, not of the event, but of the intent of his sending or coining into the world. Christ was not sent into the world with any intent on God’s part, nor came with any intention of his own, to

make those which see to become blind, meaning either to augment or to discover to their shame the spiritual blindness and ignorance in such men, who being ignorant, presume of their knowledge by one means or other; but with an intent to heal the blindness of all, to their comfort, peace, and glory. Therefore, if any man through a foolish and proud conceit of his own knowledge and wisdom, shall stumble at, or reject the gospel and doctrine of Christ as foolishness, and so discover himself to be

sense declared, who should reject Christ or his doctrine, was not that intent or purpose, out of which he sent Christ into the world, which was the genuine and natural product of his love, but such an intent which his perfect hatred of sin, especially of sin committed against the law of grace, formed in him.

4. The interpretation of the word world, now under assertion, magnifies that divine attribute, the love of God, incomparably more and above either of the former. They, who by the

world understand the elect only, (which is the substance, also, of the second interpretation, unless it chooseth rather to resolve itself into this third, as was lately proved,) allow a very small, narrow, and inconsiderable sphere, for so noble, active, and diffusive a principle, as the love of God is, in comparison of those who extend it to the Whole circumference of mankind. The whole element, and vast body of the air, in all the dimensions of it, height, depth, length, and breadth, make but a

elect, *i. e.* of those only who shall in the end be saved, and preach this for the gospel unto the world, do by men, in respect of their spiritual accommodation, as God should do by the world in their temporal, in case he should keep his sun in a continual eclipse, suffer ten parts of the light of it to be perpetually obscured.

5. This interpretation, we now plead, is of fair and full consistency with those things which the Scriptures so frequently and constantly teach and affirm, concerning the

between the exposition we contend for, and all such veins of Scripture expression, as these: whereas the other interpretations are at an absolute and manifest defiance with them.

6. And, lastly, the sense now argued for is attested by Calvin himself upon the place, with several other Protestant divines.

“Both,” saith he, “are here distinctly delivered unto us; namely, that faith in Christ is of a saving nature *unto all*; and that Christ therefore brought life, because his heavenly

Father would not have *mankind* to perish, *which he loveth*." And more plainly afterwards : "He useth a note of universality, both that he may invite all to the participation of life, and that he may cut off matter of excuse from unbelievers. The word world, which he useth before likewise, importeth as much. For though there will be nothing found in the world worthy the favour of God, yet he showeth himself *propitious*, or favourable, *unto the whole world*, in that he calls all men without exception to

when being to name those whom God so loved, he doth not mention Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob, Moses, David, the prophets, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, or holy martyrs, but the world, which our evangelist in his epistle affirmeth to lie wholly in wickedness, and of which Christ himself more than once affirmeth the devil to be the prince.” So that this writer, by the world, doth not understand the elect only, or the world of the elect, whereof the devil is nowhere affirmed by Christ to be the prince,

Christ died for all men, that all and *every one*, by the mediation of faith, may, through the virtue of this ransom, obtain remission of sins and eternal life.” Evident it is that these men, by God’s love to the world,” understand his love of compassion to all mankind, inasmuch as not a part or some, but the whole and all particulars of mankind, were fallen. Besides, saying, “that all and every one”; may “through the mediation of faith obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life through the virtue of

of the condemnation of unbelievers, “such an event as this,” saith he, “is not of itself intended by God, but accidentally follows through, the default of men.” Yet again, “If this redemption be not supposed as a common benefit bestowed upon all men, that indifferent and promiscuous preaching of the gospel which was committed to the apostles to be performed in all nations will have no true foundation.” Doubtless, that which is bestowed upon all men by God, was by him intended for all men

that he died as much for these as for those who are saved.

Nor, doubtless, had the other (I mean Chrysostom) any other notion of *the world* in the said Scripture than the former: for, describing those whom God is here said to have loved, he gives no other description of them than which agreeth as well to the reprobate as elect, affirming them to be such “who come from the earth and ashes, who are full of an infinite number of sins, who injured or offended him without ceasing, very

with the interpretation given; but I take no pleasure in quotations from men, nor do I know any great use of them, unless it be to heal the offence which truth is always apt to give to prepossessed and prejudicate minds. The use which more commonly is made of them is a grand abuse, being nothing else hut the interposing or thrusting of the credits and authorities of men between the judgments of men and the truth, that so the one should not easily come at the other. However, we have, I trust, made it fully

evident by many demonstrations, in full conjunction with the judgments of learned men, that the Scripture in hand casteth the light of that love of God, out of which he gave his only begotten Son to death, with an equal brightness upon all mankind; and consequently, that this death of his faceth the whole posterity of Adam with the same sweetness and graciousness of aspect. The Scripture last opened, speaking so plainly and fully (as we have heard) the point in hand, might well

be accepted as a sufficient security, that all its fellows mentioned with it, as in effect they speak, so likewise they intend and mean the same thing. Yet because prejudice is froward, and hard of satisfaction, let us impartially examine one or two more of the company; we shall find universal atonement as well at the bottom as at the top, as well in the heart as in the face of them. The former of the two shall be that of the apostle Paul, “To wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto

understand hereby such an act, whereby he renders or seeks to render himself loving, gracious, and propitious unto the world, neither yet can the word “world” signify anything but the generality or universality of men, or, howsoever, not the elect in particular. The reason is, because God cannot, in any tolerable sense or construction of words, be said to reconcile himself unto those with whom he is not angry or offended, or to render himself loving and propitious unto those to whom his love is so great

takes a course, or useth means, to bring himself into a complacency, or love of friendship with them, as when a father useth means to recover his son of the phrensy, or plague. It is true, a father loves his son with a benevolous affection, or with a love of pity, as we commonly call it, even whilst he is under a phrensy, and hath the plague upon him; hut he takes no pleasure in his company, doth not delight to converse with him as with a friend, bestows nothing upon him at the present, but only in order

into a way or capacity of making so rich and glorious a proposal as this of forgiveness of sins unto the world, he put himself, as it were, into his Christ; or, as our apostle's expression is, he was in Christ; meaning, that that which God did, or intended to do, by his being in Christ, as mediator, was immediately and in reference unto a further end, that by means of his death he might offer free pardon and forgiveness of sins unto the world; mediate, and as more principally intended, that he might, by means of thus

offer, reconcile the world unto himself, i. e. prevail with men to repent of their sins, and turn in faith and love unto him. Evident it is from the very letter of the context, that the apostle's intent in this Scripture was only to express and declare the tenor or purport of the gospel, or, as he calls it, of that word of reconciliation, the ministry whereof, he saith, in the end of the verse, was committed unto him. Do but read in the former verse to this, and you will clearly see it: “ And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to

for them.” Calvin also, though not altogether so expressly as the former, yet with clearness enough, secondeth the same interpretation, writing on the place thus: “But the fuller and richer sense is, that God was in Christ, and then, that he reconciled the world unto himself.” And a little after, “To what purpose then did God appear in Christ unto men? for reconciliation, that they who were strangers might be adopted for sons.” If this were the end of that reconciliation for which God appeared in Christ

the sense and import of these words, the whole world. By the whole world, say some, John means the elect living in all parts of the world; others, men of all sorts and conditions; others, Jews and Gentiles. Some, to avoid the like danger, I mean of being convinced of the truth, and suspecting, as they have cause enough, the security of those interpretations, take sanctuary under the wing of this distinction. Christ, say they, is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, *i. e.* of all men in the world in point of

sufficiency, but not by way of intention on God's part. Yet let us afford the honour of a trial to the three interpretations mentioned. For the first, which, by the whole world, understands only the elect, this hath been resolved into smoke already, pages 132—140, in this chapter; where, if the reader please to look back, he may see it smoking still. The other two being confederate with it, for both the one and the other are the same in substance of matter with it, and differ only in terms of explication, must needs fall

with it. For both they, who by the whole world, in the Scripture in hand, understand men of all sorts and conditions, by these men of all sorts and conditions understand the elect only; and they also, who interpret Jews and Gentiles, understand no other, either Jews or Gentiles, but the elect only. So that all the three interpretations are interpretatively but one and the same. And, therefore, as in case Abraham's son by Sarah had been sacrificed, Isaac could not have escaped; no

may admit of the same sense and signification, both in the Scripture in hand, and in all the other Scriptures usually brought upon the theatre of discourse, for the same end and purpose with, it. But the mouth of this plea is easily stopped. For

1. The determinate signification of a word in one place, is no argument of the same sense or signification of it in another place. Elohim, Gen. 1: 1, signifieth him who is by nature GREEK, John 17:3, a true God subsisting in three persons; but this is a

weak proof that it is to be taken, or that it may be taken in the same sense, Psal. 82:6, where the prophet introduceth God speaking thus to, and concerning the rulers of the earth: I have said, “Ye are Elohim,” or gods. That the word GREEK signifieth, 1 Peter 3:3, as it is translated, “adorning,” is no argument at all that it so signifieth John 3:16, or in twenty places besides where it is used. Nay, in one and the same period or sentence, where the same word is twice used, it does not follow that because it is

drinketh of this water, shall thirst again; hut whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst,” &c., John 4:13,14; by water, in the first place, he clearly meaneth that common and material element commonly known by the name of water; but in the latter, water analogically only, and spiritually so called, viz, the gift of the Spirit, as himself interpreteth, John 7:39; 4:14, compared. Therefore, to heap up a multitude of quotations from the Scriptures, wherein the word “world,” or “the

2. If the said words, either may be taken, or necessarily must be taken, in the places so multiplied, in any of the said significations, it is a sign that there is a sufficient ground of reason in the contexts respectively, to enforce either the necessity or possibility of such significations. Now then to infer or suppose, either a like necessity or possibility of the same signification, where there is no sufficient ground in the context to enforce either, which is the case in hand, but many sufficient grounds to

overthrow such
significations, as hath been
in part already, and shall,
God assisting, be out of
hand further manifested, as
concerning the texts
insisted upon in this and
the following chapter, is as
if I should prove that such
or such a man must needs
be a prisoner at London,
because he is a prisoner in
York; or that he hath the
liberty of the Tower of
London, because he may
walk where he pleaseth
within the liberties of York
Castle. The signification of
words in one place, is not to
be adjudged by their

signification in another, unless both the contexts stand uniformly, and impartially affected towards this signification.

3. That neither of the two texts already opened, will at any hand endure any of the three significations of the word world, lately mentioned as pretended unto, hath been argued into the clearest evidence. That the text in hand no whit better comports with any of them than they, appeareth thus:

(1.) If any of the said three significations of “the whole world, should be here

admitted, the apostle (or rather the Holy Ghost by the apostle) must be supposed to speak after no better rate of reason than this, “Christ is the propitiation not for our sins only, but also for the sins” of some few particular men besides, whom you know not, or of some few persons, as well of the Gentiles as of the Jews. For none of the three interpretations amounts to anything more than this, as is evident. They who interpret, that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of Jews and Gentiles, by Jews

their sins.” “And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” This last clause, “but also for the sins of the whole world,” is clearly added by way of augmentation or further strengthening to the ground of their faith and comfort. Now evident it is, that there will be little or nothing found in it tending to any such end, as the further enlargement of their comfort, or strengthening to their faith, above what the former clause presented, but

rather than which will be
prejudicial and ensnaring
unto both, unless these
words, “of the whole
world,” be taken in their
comprehensive
signification, I mean for all
men in the world without
exception. For to say thus
unto a believer, or to a
professor of the faith of
Christ, who is doubtful
about the grounds of his
faith, and but weak in the
comfort of it, (which was
apparently the condition of
those to whom John writes
this epistle, and in
consideration whereof that
very clause we now speak of

was added to the former,) “Christ is the propitiation for the sins” of the elect, or of some few particular men, must needs rather add to their doubtings than their faith, and augment their fears rather than their comforts ; yea, and would take from rather than add to that ground of consolation, which he had administered in the former clause, “ and he is the propitiation for our sins.” For when I am in suspense, and doubtful in my spirit whether Christ died for me, or he a “propitiation for my sins,” or no, how should it

whether Christ died for me, or no, needs be the more provoked and enraged within me, by considering, that Christ died for some few particular men only? Or doth such an assertion as this, that Christ died for some particular men, though never so substantially proved, though never so effectually believed, any ways enable, or dispose me to believe, that I am one of those particular men for whom he died? Nay, rather, must not a rumination or feeding upon such a notion, or conception as that, falling

in conjunction with the weakness and doubtfulness of my faith, together with the sense and conscience of my many corruptions and infirmities otherwise, of necessity involve and perplex me with so much the more grievous and inextricable fears, that I am none of those particular men, none of those few for whom alone Christ died? Therefore any of those restrained interpretations of “the whole world,” which we have opposed, do most manifestly oppose the plain scope and drift of the Holy Ghost, which was, as hath

been proved, the strengthening or encouragement of their faith upon rich and excellent terms; whereas the true interpretation of the words, and that which we plead, hath the fairest and fullest consistence with such an intent, which can lightly be imagined. For the consideration, that Christ by his death became a propitiation, or made a full atonement for the sins of all men, without exception, as it tends to magnify “the unsearchable riches” of the grace “of Christ,” on the one hand, and so is proper

to strengthen the hand of every man's faith; so, on the other hand, it throws down every mountain, and fills every valley, removes all obstructions, takes away all impediments, clears all scruples, and so prepares a plain and smooth way for every man to come unto Christ by believing, yea, and cuts off all occasions of relapses, or faintings in faith afterwards.

How it comes to pass, and how it may well stand with the justice of God, that, notwithstanding the death of Christ for the sins of all men, yet all men are not

competible unto men, the contrary whereof hath been undeniably proved, chap. 3; where likewise it was particularly argued and made good, that God is, and very properly may he, said to intend, whatsoever he vouchsafeth proper and sufficient means to effect, especially with a command to improve or use them accordingly, whether the thing he effected or no. So that to affirm and grant, that Christ died sufficiently for all men, and yet deny that he died intentionally for all men, is to speak contradictions, and to pull

down with the left hand
what a man hath built up
with his right. Certainly he
that levyeth and employeth
a proportion of means
sufficient and proper for
the bringing of anything to
pass, must needs, in one
sense or other, in one
degree or other, be
supposed to intend the
bringing to pass of such a
thing. Nor is it any
dishonour at all unto God,
nor in the least unworthy of
him, that he doth not
always attain his ends, or
things intended by him, no
more than it is that sin
should be committed in the

sufficiently for all men, either God intended this sufficiency of his death for or unto all men or not.

If not, then was the glory or sovereign worth of this death of his, besides the intentions of God. God did not intend any such completeness of merit or satisfaction in his death as were in it. But this, I presume, tempteth no man's thoughts or belief. If, then, God did intend the sufficiency of his death for or unto all men, why may it not be said, that he intended his death itself accordingly ? and so, that

Christ died intentionally, on God's part, for all men ? The word sufficiently is no terminus diminuens, no term of diminution. Therefore the argument follows roundly: if God intended the sufficiency of Christ's death for all men, then he intended his death itself for all men; and, consequently, Christ died not sufficiently only, but intentionally also for all men. And so the distinction vanisheth.

Thirdly, How can he, who payeth nothing at all for a man, nor intends to pay anything, be

sufficient to ransom me? or is that sufficient to ransom me, which was only paid for the ransom of another ?

Fourthly, If there were a sufficiency in the death of Christ for all men, or for the salvation of all men, and God not intend it for all men, but for a few, a number inconsiderable only, then will the death of Christ be found rather matter of dishonour or disparagement unto him, than of honour. Suppose a man were possessed of a very great estate in gold, silver, and other the good things of this life, whereby

men,) as harsh, barbarous, homonymous; yea, the former of the two as absolutely false. “That expression,” saith Beza, “Christ died for the sins of all men, sufficiently, but not efficaciously, though in *at* rectified sense it be true, yet is it extremely harsh, and no less ambiguous than barbarous. For the particle *for* imports either the counsel of the Father, according to which Christ suffered, or else the effect itself of his sufferings, or rather both; whereas neither of them belong to any but the elect.” Piscator

to his antagonist, thus:
“The proposition laid down
is false, viz. that Christ died
sufficiently for every
particular or single man;
this is thy assertion. For
Christ died most
sufficiently for the elect,
paying the price of their
redemption, I mean his
precious blood, that blood
of the Son of GOD. But for
reprobates Christ died
neither in one kind nor
other, *neither sufficiently*
nor efficaciously.”

CHAPTER 6.

Wherein several texts of the second sort of Scriptures propounded Chap. 5, as holding forth the Universality of Redemption, by Christ, are discussed.

THE first of these Scriptures there mentioned was this: “Who gave himself a ransom for all,” or for all men, “to be testified in due time,” 1 Tim. 2:6. Let the context adjoining to this Scripture be narrowly sifted, and then, if we shall but grant that the apostle speaks

either sap, sense, savour, or anything congruous to the judgments or understandings of men, we shall not be able to deny but that it carries the doctrine asserted with a high hand of evidence in it. Evident it is, that the apostle in this verse goes on with the confirmation or further proof of that reason of his, laid down verse 4, for the making good what he had said verse 3. That which he had said in this third verse is this: "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of *God* our Saviour." This is good,

unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, as John intimates, 1 John 5:16. For that which followeth verse 2 clearly evinceth it; “For kings, and for all in authority.” Certainly if this be good and acceptable in the sight of *God*, that we should pray for *all* of one sort or degree of men in the world, especially for *all* in authority, (in which sort or rank of men there are many as unworthy and incapable of our prayers as-in any other,) it is good and acceptable in his sight likewise, that we should pray for *all* in *all* other

ranks or sorts of men whatsoever. For there is nothing imaginable to cause a difference in this point. So then, to prove that it is “good and acceptable in the sight of *God* to pray for all men,” without exception, the apostle layeth down this ground, verse 4: “That God will have *all* men to be saved.” If now by *all* men in this reason we shall understand only some of *all* sorts of men, or *all* the elect only, we shall shorten the arm of the apostle’s argument so far that it will not reach half way towards

that conclusion, for the proof whereof it is brought, and so shall make him reason very weakly, and, indeed, ridiculously, as, viz., after this manner: “It is good and acceptable in the sight of *God* that we should pray universally for *all* men, without exception of any, because God will have all his elect to be saved, or some out of every sort of men.” There is little savour of an argument in this; whereas the rationality and strength of the apostle’s arguing, rightly understood, is pregnant and full of

conviction. “It is good and acceptable in the sight of God” that we should pray for *all* men, without exception, because his will is to have *all* men, without exception, saved. The strength of this argument lieth in this ground, or clear principle in reason, viz., that a conformity unto his own will, in the will and endeavours of men, is, and must needs be, “good and acceptable in the sight of God.” Now then to prove that God’s will is, that *all* men without exception, should be saved, the apostle brings this reason,

in the words in hand, viz., that “Christ Jesus gave himself a ransom for *all* men.” So that GREEK, *all* men here, in this reason, must of necessity be of the same extent, with the same word in the doctrine or conclusion which was to be proved; otherwise we shall make the apostle stumble at that stone in arguing, at which only novices, or learners-in-wait to deceive, are wont to stumble, as viz., when there is more put into the conclusion than into the premises. That which here lay upon the apostle’s hand to prove, was, as hath

them, but resolved to do nothing at all for any more of them. Therefore, universality of redemption by Christ is the most unquestionable doctrine of the apostle in this Scripture.

The next specified in the said catalogue or inventory, was, "Because we thus judge, that if one died for *all*, then were *all* dead ; and that he died for *all*, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again," 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. We see the apostle's

as is affirmed. But then,
2. I answer further, by way
of exception, four things:

(1.) That neither the
terms we speak of, nor any
other words or expressions
in Scripture, are in any
other case, or upon any
other pretence whatsoever,
to be taken out of their
proper and best-known
significations, but only
when the tenor of the
context or some
circumstance of the place
doth necessitate and
enforce such a construction
of them. Now, evident it is,
by what hath been formerly
argued upon the Scriptures

all sorts of men, for Jews and Gentiles, or the like, therefore they are to be taken in the same sense in all others where they are found—is notorious and most unworthy of considering men. Though, whilst a man is a prisoner, he cannot go whither he desires, but must be content with the narrow bounds of his prison; it doth not follow from hence, that therefore, when he is discharged and set at liberty, he must needs continue in his prison still, especially when his necessary occasions call

him to another place, whither also he hath a desire otherwise to go.

We have, as concerning the former Scripture, evidently proved that the terms "*all* men" must be of necessity taken in their most proper, free, and unlimited significations; and shall, God assisting, demonstrate the same in those yet remaining. Let us at present, because the place in hand is pregnant and full to our purpose, evince, above all contradiction, that the words "*all*," or "*all* men," in it cannot, with the honour

that Christ died, we shall understand the universality of the elect only, “ for *all* men,” *i. e.* for *all* the elect, and for these only, we shall grievously misfigure the fair face of a worthy sentence, and render it incongruous and inconsistent with all rules and principles of discourse: for then the tenor of it must rise and run thus: We judge that Christ died for all the elect, that all the elect who shall live and be recovered from death by Christ, should not live, *See.* Doth not the ears of every man’s reason, yea, of common

or these might live: for these words, “ that they who live,” clearly import a possibility at least, yea, a futurity also, *i. e.* that it would so come to pass, that some of those *all*, for whom Christ died, would not live, and consequently would be in no capacity of living from themselves to live unto him. The uncouthness and senselessness of such interpretations as these was somewhat more at large argued in the next preceding chapter; but now let us take the word GREEK, *all*, in the proper and due signification of it,

hereunto by dying for them, and, by resuming his life and being after his death, is become capable of their love and service to him in this kind. In such a carriage of the place as this, there is spirit and life, evidence of reason, commodiousness of sense, regularity of construction, no forcing or straining of words or phrases, or the like; whereas, in any such expositions which contract the signification of the word GREEK, *all* men, either to the elect, or to any lesser number of men than *all*, there will be found an

former head of Scriptures, though I deny not, but that in some places it signifies only some part of men in the world, and not the entire universality of men, as Luke 2:1; Acts 19:27, and frequently elsewhere; yet that it anywhere signifies precisely that part of the world which the Scripture calls the elect, I absolutely deny, neither hath it yet been, nor, I believe, ever will be proved ; and the rather, because the Holy Ghost delights still, as some instances have been given in Chap. 5., and more might be added without

which words he clearly supposeth, that Christ died for as many as were dead, and consequently for *all*, without exception, inasmuch as *all*, without exception or difference, were dead. A little after, thus : “for it argueth an excess of much love, both to die for *so great a world*, and to die for it being so affected or disposed as it was.” Amongst our later divines, Musculus is not the least, if not equal to the greatest. Yet he also gives the right-hand of fellowship to the interpretation given upon

the place. “But Christ,” saith he, “died not only for his friends, hut for his enemies also; not for some men only, but for all, without exception. This is the unmeasurable or vast extent of the love of God.” But the cause we plead needs no such advocates as these, being potent enough with its own evidence and equity, and therefore we shall retain no more of them.

A third text of Scripture presented upon the same account with the former, was, “that he by the grace of God should, taste death,

GREEK, for every man,” Heb. 2:9. This clause importeth that universality of atonement made by the death of Christ, which we maintain more significantly, if more may be, and with less liableness to any evasion or shift, than any of the former, places engaged in the warfare. To show that the Lord Christ, though clothed with a body of flesh, wherein he was capable of dying as well as other men, yet did not suffer death simply through the malice or power of his enemies, but upon an account far superior to

these. The apostle attributes his death to the grace of God, i. e. the love and gracious affections of God, not towards some, or a few, no, nor yet towards all men collectively taken or in the lump but towards all men distributively taken, i. e. towards every particular and individual man. "GREEK" saith the Holy Ghost, "for every man;" i.e. to procure eternal redemption and salvation, for every man, without the exclusion of any. I cannot apprehend what can reasonably be said to

alienate the mind or import of this Scripture from our present cause. Evident it is, and you shall find, our best interpreters of the place affirming the same, that the apostle in these words, “that through the grace of God he might taste death,” &c., assigns a reason, or two rather, of what he had said a little before concerning the incarnation and humiliation of Jesus Christ, whom he had in the former chapter asserted to be the Son. of God, to prevent or heal any scandal or offence that either had already, or might

afterwards arise in the minds of these Hebrews, through the unlikelihood, strangeness, or incredibleness of such a thing. It is a saying among philosophers, and all men have experience, in part, of truth in it, that a knowledge of the reasons or causes of things causeth admiration, and so all troublesomeness of thoughts about them to cease. So then, the apostle's drift and intent in these words mentioned, being to satisfy the Hebrews concerning such a strange, wonderful, and unheard of thing, as, 1 That the Son of

should come to understand that it was far lighter and less considerable ; their scandal and offence, instead of being healed Or prevented, would be more strengthened and increased, as usually it comes to pass in such cases. Now, evident it is, 1. That the apostle's words in this place, "That He, through the grace of God, should taste death for every man," in the plainest, the most obvious and direct sense and signification of them, hold forth the doctrine which we maintain for truth, here

being no restraint at all, nor the least whispering of any limitation to be put upon that term of universality, GREEK, every man; and 2. As evident it is, that the death of Christ for all men, without the exception of any, which is the doctrine we assert, and the grace of God so intending it, amount to a far more weighty consideration and satisfaction, touching those great dispensations spoken of, (the incarnation and humiliation of the Son of God,) than his dying only for a few, or for a select

must be their interpretation who oppose the exposition given, is not to interpret, but to correct, and to exercise a magisterial authority over the Scriptures.

Nor had Pareus himself the heart to decline the interpretation asserted, though he seems somewhat desirous by some expressions, to hide this his ingenuity from his fellows, to avoid their offence, “Whereas,” saith he, “the apostle saith, for every man, it respects the amplification, or extent, of the death of Christ. *He died*

not for some few; the efficacy, or virtue, of it appertains unto ALL. Therefore there is life prepared,” (or made ready,) “in the death of Christ, for ALL afflicted consciences,” &c. The truth is, that there can be no solid ground of peace or comfort to any afflicted conscience whatsoever, without the supposal of Christ’s death for every man, without exception, as hath been argued in part, page 153, &c. of the former chapter; and might be further evicted above all contradiction. Amongst the

orthodox fathers, Chrysostom, who, as we heard, avouched the exposition given of the former Scripture, stands by his own judgment and mine, in his explication of this. “That he, through the grace of God, should taste death for every man; not only,” saith he, “for the faithful, or those that believe, but for *all the world*. He indeed died for ALL men. For what if all men do not believe ? yet he hath done his part,” or fully performed that which was proper for him to do.

The Scripture next

evinced, in page 158 of this chapter, from the unquestionable tenor and carriage of the whole context, that by “all men,” cannot possibly be understood, either some of all sorts of men, or Jews and Gentiles, or all the elect, or the like; but of necessity, all of all sorts of men, simply and universally, without the exception, of any, whether Jews or Gentiles. Any other interpretation or sense of the words, GREEK, all men, but this, renders the apostle palpably impertinent and weak (that

world, will in time perish, and that according to the decree or will of God; the tenor whereof is, that all persons dying in impenitency and unbelief shall perish. Yet the Scriptures do nowhere say upon any such account as this, either in terminis, or in substance, that God will have all men to perish, and not to come to the knowledge of the truth. Which is somewhat more than a topic argument, that God is not therefore said to will that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth,

changeable, as we shall further show, God willing, in due time. Now then, if it be the will of God to have all men, without exception, saved, &c., most certain it is that Christ died, and intentionally on God's part, for all men, without exception; because it is not imaginable that God should be willing to have those saved for whom he was unwilling that salvation should be procured.

The latter of the two Scriptures lately brought upon the theatre of our present discourse, acts the same part with the former.

much signify what himself willeth to be done, as what is our duty to do.”

I confess that no signification whatsoever, whether of what a man willeth or decreeth to be done, or of what is the duty of another to do, can properly be said to be the will of the signifier ; but yet that will, wherewith or out of which God willeth or commandeth. us to do that which is our duty to do, is as properly his will as that whereby he willeth or decreeth things to be done. My will or desire that my child should obey me, or

faculty being natural, there can be no such difference between the acts proceeding from, it which should make some to be more proper and others less, though some may be better and others worse. But this difference can have no place in the acts of the will of God; therefore, if the precept or preceptive will of God be not properly his will, neither can any other will of his, or any other act of his will, be properly such. If so, then that will of God, or act of will in God, whereby he willeth or enjoineth faith and

them, wherein he distinguisheth between the decree of God and the thing decreed by him, affirming that “the thing which God decreeth may be repugnant to or inconsistent with the thing which he commandeth, though the decree itself cannot be repugnant to the command.” The vanity of this distinction clearly appeareth upon this common ground, viz. that acts are differenced and distinguished by their objects: therefore, if the object of God’s decreeing will, or the thing decreed by

death of my child, and yet at the same time seriously also will and enjoin the physician to do his best to recover him.

Again, if God enjoin faith and repentance unto all men, with a declaration that he enjoineth them in order to their salvation, or with a promise that, upon their obedience to this injunction of his, they shall be actually saved, then can he not at the same time will with a secret will the condemnation of any. But most evident it is, that unto whomsoever he enjoineth faith or repentance, he

laws or commands which he judgeth meet to impose upon them; or, which is the same, that God hath not positively decreed that all men shall, or shall be necessitated by him to live in subjection to all those laws which he hath appointed unto them. This sense is orthodox, and blameable, but holds no intelligence with that opinion which supposeth one will in God, according unto which he willeth all men to be saved; and another, according unto which he willeth the far greatest part of men to be

damned, and both antecedent. For otherwise, two such wills as these are fairly and clearly enough consistent in him. God, according to the distinction of the will of God into antecedent and consequent, first set on foot by some of the fathers, Chrysostom, and Damascen by name, and since made use of by the schoolmen, may, with the former, be said to will the salvation of all men; and yet with the latter be said also, in a sense, to will the condemnation of far the greatest part of them. His

because he vouchsafeth a sufficiency of means unto all men whereby to be saved ; partly also, because he hath passed no decree against any man which either formally, or consequentially, or in any consideration whatsoever excludeth any man, personally considered, from salvation before he voluntarily excludeth himself by such sinful miscarriages and deportments, which, according to the revealed will of God, render him utterly incapable thereof. According to the latter of

the salvation only of a few, comparatively. But of these things more hereafter.

In the meantime, evident it is from the Scriptures argued, that Christ died intentionally for all men, without exception, considered as men; and that there was nothing more procured, nor intended to be procured, thereby for one man than another, personally considered, or simply as men. Only this was intended in this death of Christ, in the general, that whosoever, whether few or whether many, should with

his Son.

The last Scripture of the division yet in hand was this, “ Therefore as by the offence of one, the judgment came upon all men *to* condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon *all men* unto the justification of life,” Rom. 5:18. Evident it is, that the apostle in this passage compareth the extent of the condemnation which came by the sin of Adam, with the extent of the grace of justification which came by Christ, in respect of the numbers of

comes by Jesus Christ, said to come *upon all men* likewise. Now to say, that *all men* in the former clause is to be taken properly and signifies *all men*, indeed, without exception of any, which all expositors grant without exception of any, but in the latter improperly and with limitation, yea, with such a limitation, which comparatively, and a few only excepted, excludes *all men*, there being not the least ground, or reason in the context to vary the signification of the words, or to make them to signify

more in the one clause and fewer in the other, is to exercise an arbitrary dominion over the expressions of the Holy Ghost, and to invent and set up significations and senses of words at pleasure. Nor doth it at all ease the matter, to say or prove, that in other places of Scripture this word GREEK, all men, signifies not all without exception, but only a great number, or all of one particular sort or kind of persons; because,

1. If it can be proved that in other places of Scripture it so signifies, I mean not all

first place signify material or elementary water; in the latter, spiritual water or the Holy Ghost, reasons are obvious and near at hand; we shall not need to name them. But why the words, GREEK, all men, in the place of the apostle under debate, being twice used, should be conceived so far to vary in their significations as in the former clause, to signify all men without exception; in the latter, very few men, no like reason, nor indeed any competent, can be given.

3. Though “all men” doth in some places signify only a

place, makes the apostle to speak thus, “If all men were punished through the offence,” (or his offence, meaning Adam’s,) “they” (i.e. these all men) “may doubtless be justified from hence; ” (*i. e.* by that overabundance of grace and righteousness as he there speaketh, which is given in Christ.) The former part of his commentary is more full and pregnant to this purpose, but because the transcription would be somewhat long, I leave it to be read in the author himself. Nor are there

wanting amongst our late reformed divines, surnamed orthodox, men of eminent learning, piety and worth, who subscribe the said interpretation. “That our reparation,” (restauration,) saith Mr. Bucer upon the place, “is made by Christ, and that it is more efficacious than the sin of Adam, and that it is of *larger extent*, is that which the apostle argueth in this and the following section. Again, upon those words, “Sed non ut GREEK,” and thus : “ The apostle here meaneth, that the grace of Christ did more

and salvation unto all men, remains to be unfolded in due place. Upon the 17th verse the aforesaid author yet more clearly attests the substance of our interpretation, where he gives an account how the grace of Christ may be said to be of larger extent than the sin of Adam, notwithstanding it be true that this grace took away nothing but what, in a sense, was the fruit and effect of sin. “If we consider,” saith he, “that every particular man by his transgressions increaseth the misery of mankind, and

suppose Bucer hath said enough, both to assert the interpretation of the Scripture in hand, that hath been given, as also the universality of redemption by Christ.

The said Scripture calls for the sense and exposition asserted, with such a loud and distinct voice, that Gualter also (another divine of the same rank and quality with the former) could not but hearken to it. “As by the offence of one,” saith he, completing the apostle’s sentence, and rendering his sense therein, “

stand his own ground, he would remonstrate as stoutly as Corvine, or Arminius himself.

CHAPTER 7.

The third sort, or consort of Scriptures, mentioned Chap. 5, as clearly asserting the Doctrine hitherto maintained, argued, and managed to the same point.

WE shall not need, I conceive, to insist upon a particular examination of

John 6:37 ; “He that believeth in me, shall never thirst,” ver. 35; “ He that believeth, and is baptized, shall he saved,” Mark 16:16; “ That *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish,” &c. John 3:16; “ That through his name, *whosoever* believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins,” Acts 10:43; “Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, *unto all*, and *upon all* who believe ; for *all* have sinned,” &c. Rom. 3:22, 23; to omit very many others of like tenor and import.

under heaven, “If thou believest thou shalt be” saved,” even as Paul saith that he preached Christ, “admonishing *every man*, and teaching *every man* in all wisdom, that he might present *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus,” Colos. 1:28. Yea, this apostle, speaking of God himself, saith, that “he admonisheth all men every where to repent,” Acts 17:30. Now if the gospel, or God in the gospel, offereth salvation unto all men, without exception, and insureth it accordingly upon their believing, certainly he hath

it for them, with his blood, inasmuch as there is no salvation, no not in Christ himself, without or otherwise than by remission of sins ; nor any remission of sins in or by him, without shedding of blood. Therefore all those Scriptures, wherein God promiseth and ascertaineth salvation am to all men, without exception, upon their believing, are pregnant with this truth, that Christ laid down his life for the salvation of all and every man.

If it be here replied and said, But though God in the

gospel offers salvation unto all men, and promiseth salvation unto all men upon condition of their believing respectively, yet knowing certainly beforehand that none will believe, but only such and such by name, as viz. those for whom there is salvation purchased by Christ, he may upon a sufficient ground, and with security enough, promise salvation unto all men, upon condition they will believe, answer,

Though God, by means of the certainty of such his knowledge, may, without

danger of failing in point of promise-keeping, or of being taken at his word to his dishonour, promise salvation unto all men, without exception, upon the terms specified, though it should be supposed that Christ hath not purchased salvation for all men; yet upon such a supposition as this, he cannot, either with honour or otherwise, or with truth, make any such offer or promise. Not with honour; because for a man, that is generally and certainly known to be worth but only one thousand pounds in estate,

parts of the proposition, the antecedent and consequent. If this connexion be contingent, loose, or false, the proposition itself is false, though in every other respect it should be accommodated to the best. As, for example, in this proposition, If Isaac were Abraham's son, then was he truly godly; both the parts considered apart, are true ; for true it is, 1. That Isaac was Abraham's son: and 2. That he was truly godly; yet the proposition is absolutely false; because there is no necessary or

essential connexion
between being Abraham's
son and true godliness:
therefore the one cannot be
truly inferred or concluded
from the other. In like
manner, when I shall say
thus unto a. man, If thou
believest thou shalt be
saved, it is neither his
non-believing, nor the
certainty of my knowledge
that he will not believe, that
either maketh or evinceth
such a proposition to be
true: because neither of
these relates to the
connexion of the parts
thereof, nor contains the
least reason or ground why

should believe. Now certain it is, that if Christ died not for him, there is no more salvation for him, in case he should believe, than there would be in case he should not believe: there being no salvation for any man, upon any terms or condition whatsoever, unless Christ hath purchased it for him by his death. Nor doth Christ's purchasing salvation for any man, depend upon such a man's believing; no more doth his non-purchasing salvation for him upon his not believing. So that, unless it

salvation in Christ for any man, in respect of his mere nature or person; or howsoever, himself plainly denies it: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit,” John 12:24. If there be no salvation in him for men but by purchase, and this with his blood, then hath he no more salvation in him than what he thus purchased; no man hath any thing more by purchase than what he hath bought or purchased. Therefore, if

Christ hath salvation in him for all men without exception, he must have purchased or bought it for them with his blood. If so, he must either purchase more than he intended, or else intend to purchase salvation for all and every man. And what is this, without any parable, but to die intentionally for all men? Therefore the distinction of Christ dying sufficiently for all men, but not intentionally, is ridiculous, and unworthy from first to last of any intelligent or considering man.

Nor is that distinction, because it relates to the subject-matter of our present chapter, so emphatically insisted upon by Mr. Rutherford, of much better import. “That eternal life,” saith he, “should be offered unto all and every individual man, upon condition of faith ; and that life should be offered unto all and every individual man, out of an intent on God’s part to give life unto them in case they believe, are two sayings widely different.”

For, doubtless, the latter hath every whit as much

truth in it, yea, every whit as much clear and pregnant truth in it as the former, yea, hath in effect one and the same truth. For when God offers eternal life unto all and every individual man, upon condition of faith, is it not his intention that they should have eternal life upon their faith, or in case they should believe? If not, then in such an offer he should offer and promise that which he intends not to give or perform, no not according to the tenor of his promise. If it be said, in favour of the distinction, But though

this, viz. that it supposeth an intention to be in God of giving life unto all men upon their faith, when he makes the offer mentioned unto them. To prove this to be an error, he argues to this effect, from John 17:2, for his other arguments are plainly GREEK; “God the Father gave power unto the Son to give eternal life to those *only* who were given unto him by the Father. But reprobates,” saith he, “are not given unto the Son by the Father therefore the Father gave no power unto the Son to give eternal life unto reprobates; and

the Father, with the Son, have judged meet and accordingly agreed upon, for the regulating of such high and important dispensations. Now, a power of conferring eternal life upon men, may very well be conceived to be a branch or part of that sovereignty or larger power, which the Father hath given unto the Son over all flesh. But an injunction or command, or a free leave or liberty, notion it how you please, given unto Him to die for a few men, cannot reasonably be looked upon

of God from him, are termed divinations. “And the elders of Moab,” saith the text, “and the elders of Midian went, and divinations in their hand,” &c. Thus, good tidings is put for the reward which good tidings usually procure unto them who bring them, 2 Sam. 4:10. In this phrase of speech, the Scriptures, or the saving knowledge of God therein revealed, are, according to the general sense of our best interpreters, termed salvation, John 4:22. So again, Heb. 2:2. Thus wisdom is called a man’s

prepared them for Christ's hand and nurture, and so to make apostles of in time; in respect of which work of God the Father, in and upon them, Christ, out of that wisdom wherein he excelled, and that knowledge which he had of the several frames and tempers of the hearts of men, made a prudent and deliberate choice of them from amongst other men for that service. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them unto me." They are said to have been the Father's, *i. e.* as it were, the Father's disciples, or persons

“taught by the Father,” John 6:45, and so, after a sort, appropriable unto the Father, (as those that believe and are taught of Christ are said to be Christ’s, or to belong to Christ,) before they became Christ’s apostles, or were chosen by him upon this account; and are said to have been given unto him out of the world by the Father, because they were peculiarly qualified, and, as it were, characterized and marked out by the Father as fit matter to be formed into apostles by his Son. The word “give” is

furnished persons for all these offices and services in his church, for the benefit of the saints, &c. Thus Acts 13:20, “ he gave them judges,” &c.; *i. e.* he qualified and furnished men amongst them, from time to time, with public spirits and with gifts fit for government, &c. So Neh. 9:27, “Thou *gavest* them Saviours;” *i. e.* thou furnishedst men with hearts, and courage, and wisdom, &c., to save them. See Eph. 1:22, “He *gave* him to be head over all things to his church *i. e.* he furnished him with

sovereignty of power, wisdom, majesty, and with all manner of endowments otherwise requisite for such a head. Thus Psal. 44:11, “Thou hast *given* us like sheep for meat,” &c.; *i. e.* by withdrawing thy presence, help, and protection from us, thou hast prepared and fitted us to become a prey and spoil to our enemies. In this sense also God saith to Jeremy, that he had *given* him (for so it is in the original) “a prophet unto the nations *i. e.* that he had furnished him, and meant to furnish him yet further, with prophetical gifts and

endowments for the benefit of nations, if they would hearken to him, Jer. 1:5. So Psal. 21:6, “Thou hast given him to be blessings,” (so it is in the original, and is your marginal translation;) *i. e.* thou hast so furnished, qualified, and disposed of him, (meaning Christ,) that whosoever will apply themselves unto him, may be made happy and blessed by him. See Ezek. 3:8, 9; Isa. 43:16, in the original, with others like. Our Saviour himself useth the word in the sense now instanced from the Scriptures, when he

them to his service, he may very well in these respects be said to have given them unto him.

Thus, by a diligent and narrow inquiry into Mr. Rutherford's Scripture, it evidently appears that there is *nec vola nec vestigium*, not the least mutter or peep, of any such notion, in it as he imagineth, viz. that if Christ should offer eternal life unto any more than only unto the elect, (so called by him,) he must needs do it besides his own and his Father's intention. Here is not the least word,

syllable, letter, apex or GREEK concerning either the Father's or the Son's intentions about the offer of salvation unto men.

By the brief discussions of this chapter, it fully appears that all those texts of Scripture which offer either forgiveness of sins or salvation unto all men without exception, and which promise either or both these unto all men upon, or upon condition of, their believing, which are very frequently numerous, do with the clearest light and evidence of truth hold forth the universality of

redemption by Christ: from whence it follows, in regular and due process of reason and discourse, that all they “ make God a liar” in such Scriptures, who restrain the salvation or redemption purchased by Christ to any lesser number of men than all.

CHAPTER 8.

Wherein the Scriptures of the fourth and last association (propounded Chap, 5.,) as pregnant also with that great truth

hitherto maintained, are impartially weighed and considered.

WE shall, God assisting, examine every of these Scriptures particularly, and so shall have occasion to exhibit the purport and tenor of them respectively as they shall be produced to act their several parts in order; in which respect we shall not here transcribe them, especially considering the reader may with a very little pains see them in their muster, Chap. 5.; but shall only point at

considering men: for if the dying of Christ for men be to be esteemed matter of love to them, as without all controversy and question it ought, what reason can there be imagined why he should die for apostate reprobates, (who yet are that kind of reprobate for which only Christ died, according to that opinion), rather than for those who, though living and dying in unbelief, yet never contracted the guilt of so desperate and provoking a sin ? But this by the way.

The tenor of the Scripture first in view, amongst those

lately appearing, is this:
“Destroy not him with thy
meat, for whom Christ
died,” Rom. 14:15.

1. That the destruction here
spoken of, whereunto the
strong Christian is so
earnestly admonished and
dehorted by the apostle
from exposing the weak, is
not any temporal
destruction, but that which
is of body and soul for ever,
is more clear than to
require proof. It is not
easily imaginable how or
that a strong Christian, or
any other man, by eating
meat sacrificed unto idols,
should expose a weak

2. Whereas he chargeth men not to destroy those “for whom Christ died,” though he doth not indeed suppose that all those shall be actually destroyed or perish, whom another may be said to destroy, *i. e.*, to do things tending to their destruction, which is the sense of the word in this place; yet this he clearly supposeth, that such men “for whom Christ died” are obnoxious to destruction, may be destroyed, and perish everlastingly. Otherwise we shall quench the spirit of his zealous tenderness over the

apostle may upon a good account admonish them to take heed of destroying such.

I answer, it can at no hand be supposed that the persons here admonished should be ignorant, whether the men about whose destruction they are so deeply cautioned by the apostle, be of the number of those “for whom Christ died,” because the apostle himself so plainly and positively asserteth it: “For whom,” saith he, “Christ died.” Besides, the main strength and stress of the argument or motive by

which he enforceth the dehortation standeth in this, that those persons, whosoever they be, whose salvation they shall endanger by eating things sacrificed to idols, are of those for whom Christ died. Now, to press an exhortation or dehortation upon the consciences of men by such a motive, wherein these men shall be supposed ignorant whether there be any truth or no, is to fight with a wooden sword; especially when it shall be yet further supposed, that such men are under an absolute

particular and by name but himself.

Therefore most certain it is, that there is a possibility for those to perish and be destroyed for whom Christ died, or notwithstanding Christ's dying for them. And if so, then Christ's dying for men doth not suppose a necessity of their salvation; and if so, then Christ died as well for those who, may not be saved, and shall not be saved, as for those who may, and shall; and consequently, for all men: for they who may, and shall be saved, and they who may not, neither

shall be saved, together comprehend all men whatsoever.

The exposition of the Scripture in hand, as importing the death of Christ for those who yet may be destroyed and perish, is so pregnant with evidence and truth, that it hath subdued the judgments of all expositors I meet with unto it. “And Christ verily,” saith Chrysostom upon the place, “refused not, neither to be made a servant, nor to die for him; and wilt not thou so much as neglect thy belly to save him? For although

accursed a thing is it, that any man should destroy a brother for meat.” He had said immediately before: “If we follow Christ, he for the rescuing, or saving, our brethren, suffered death; therefore we also ought to lay down our lives for the salvation of the brethren, and to abhor the destroying of a brother more than death.” Therefore he also plainly supposeth, that even such a brother may be destroyed, and that for meat, for whom Christ died.

Musculus speaks by the same spirit with the former.

judgment stands for a possibility of falling away., and that to destruction, from true faith. But as to the former point, he speaks more significantly, a little after the former words. “It is all one, as if the apostle should say, Christ would have him saved, and sought it by his death; but thou dost not only despise thy brother, but opposest Christ also, and makest void,” or of none effect, “through thy rashness, and that for the sake of meat, that *death* of his, which he underwent *for his sake*, and by which thou thyself

also art saved.

Nor doth B. Aretius break rank, but marcheth in close order with his fellows. “The apostle’s argument,” saith he, “is from the effects: thou destroyest him with the use of things indifferent, whom Christ redeemed by his death. What madness is that?” And soon after, “Meat haply preserves thy life: but Christ died for him whom thou slayest, not by dying, but by living: what cruelty is this?”

Let R. Gualter bring up the rear, for saying, “The apostle in this teacheth that

the high opposers of the doctrine under protection in the present discourse,) speaking the same things plainly, expressly, and without parable, with the assertors of this doctrine. Neither, indeed, could they, or any other man, having such Scriptures before them as that last insisted upon, with the former, to order their judgments and thoughts, conceive, or speak otherwise, with any tolerable ingenuity, or without some such winking with the eyes which is unworthy men pretending friendship to the truth. But

let us hear what the Spirit of God saith further in the point.

The next Scripture lately directed unto was 1 Cor. 8:11:

“And through thy knowledge,” or through thy meat, as Chrysostom reads the place, “shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died.” Some copies read the words with an interrogation, and thus, either our English translators or printers, or both, deliver them unto us; others assertively. This difference in the pointing makes none in the matter

satisfaction herein; unless, haply, the consent of the best interpreters in that behalf will balance that accommodation.

“Thy Lord and Master,” saith Chrysostom on the place, “refused not to die for him: but thou makest no reckoning of him, no not so much as to abstain from a polluted table for his sake; but sufferest him to *perish after salvation procured for him* upon such terms.” And soon after, “So that here are four accusations,” or matters of charge, “and these exceeding high; 1. That he

is a brother. 2. That he is weak. 3. That he is one *whom Christ so highly prized as even to die for him.* 4. That after all this *he perisheth* for meat.”

The expressness of the words overruled even Calvin’s pen also to an assertion of the same truth. “He is indeed weak whom thou despisest, but yet a brother: for God hath adopted him. Therefore, cruel art thou who hast no care of thy brother. But that which follows is yet more pressing; viz., that even those that are rude or weak, are redeemed by the blood

can it reasonably be pretended that by the brethren, for “every of which,” he saith, “the blood of Christ was shed,” he means only the elect. For evident it is, that he speaks of the generality of professors who were joined in external communion with the churches of Christ, many of whom he could not but know, were not elect, at least in the sense of such pretenders.

Aretius worketh the place thus: “Here is another fruit” (or effect) “of that licentious liberty, greater than the former. For the

thus: “How, I pray, can he be excused, who for meat’s sake destroyeth him whom Christ redeemed with his blood ?” And not long after: “What greater sin can be committed against Christ, than to slay (or destroy) “him for whom he himself died ?”

I finish this account with Mr. I. Diodati's gloss upon the words. “Perish,” *i. e.* saith he, “shall be in danger of wounding his conscience mortally; and whereas before, through tenderness of conscience, he abhorred any thing that drew near to idolatry, he may

peradventure use himself to it to the shipwreck of salvation.”

These expositors do not mince the words, as Piscator and some few others do, who destroying hereby the best of the nourishment in them gloss them thus: “Thy weak brother shall perish,” viz. “as to thee, or as much as lieth in thee.” I confess such a bridle as this doth well in the lips of some other Scripture expressions, which will not be ruled by the truth without it, hut it encumbers the Scripture in

hand, and abridgeth the serviceableness of it. For if it shall be supposed, that that kind of offender against the weak Christian, of whom the apostle here speaketh, knoweth certainly beforehand that his act in eating meat sacrificed unto idols can have no such sad effect or sequel upon it, as the destruction of a weak brother, must he not needs be tempted hereby to despise the apostle's charge on that behalf, being grounded mainly upon such an assertion or supposal? and so be

comforted or encouraged in his sinful practice? To put restrictions upon Scripture phrases or assertions, without necessity, and this demonstrable, either from other Scriptures, or unquestionable grounds of reason, is not to interpret the Scriptures now in being, but upon the matter to make new.

If it be replied in favour of the said limitation or explication of Piscator, That there will be great weight and force enough to command the consciences of men in the apostle's argument, and to take them

nearer unto being upon any other account, or for any thing whatsoever that can be done. Therefore there is nothing can be done with any tendency towards the effecting of such a thing. Besides, were it granted, that there is a tendency in such a practice, the forbearance whereof the apostle urgeth towards the destruction of a weak brother, yea, and further, that this practice in respect of such a tendency in it were sinful, yet would there be very little in either, or both of these, to deter men from such a practice unless

hanged himself,” Matt. 27:3—5.

Thirdly, and lastly, the mention and tender of an impossible effect by way of motive, to overrule the consciences of men against a practice in one kind or other whereunto they are inclined, is little less than ridiculous, especially when the said impossibility is presumed to be known beforehand to him, the overruling of whose conscience is attempted thereby. Suppose I be full of this persuasion, 1. That I am a true believer. 2. That being such, I am under an

the same conclusion
another way, and by
another device. The
apostle, say they, calls a
weak professor of the
gospel by the name of a
brother, not as if it could be
demonstratively known
that he is a brother indeed,
but because others stand
bound by the law of charity
to judge him such: after the
same manner he saith that
Christ died for him, not as
if he would have men to
believe this according to
the judgment or with the
certainty of faith, but only
with the judgment of
charity. Upon this supposal

they draw up the apostle's argument for him, thus, "Thy brother shall perish, for whom," &c., *i. e.* by the abuse of thy knowledge, thou mayest be the destruction of him whom thou art bound in charity to look upon as thy brother in Christ, and one of those for whom Christ died. But,

1. Why stand we not bound to believe, only with the judgment of charity, and not with the certainty of faith, that Christ is the Son of God, or Saviour of the world, &c. as well as to believe only after this manner, that he may

“perish, for whom Christ died?” this latter being as positively, as clearly, as roundly and fully asserted by the Holy Ghost, as either of the former? Or what is such a liberty of interpreting Scriptures, as this, being interpreted, but an effectual door opened for the reducing of all things whatsoever in matters of religion, yea, the truth and authority of the Scriptures themselves, to the judgment of charity, and consequently to the casting the judgment of faith out of doors ? But,

2. To enjoin me a belief,

that he may perish through the abuse of his liberty. Otherwise the apostle's argument for the dissuading of him from such an abuse, cannot be supposed to take any place in him, nor work at all upon him, in order to such an end. For no consideration or saying whatsoever, unless believed with one kind of faith or other, can have any influence or operation upon men, either to persuade them to or from any practice. If, then, the strong Christian stands bound to believe, be it only according to the judgment

a profession, are hypocrites, and not true brethren. 2. That many of this number will perish at last in their hypocrisy and unbelief. And thus fax they hold nothing but truth. But, 3. and lastly, they hold yet further, which they should do better to let go, that Christ died for none of those professors, who perish in the end. These things they hold and believe, not with a belief according to the judgment of charity, but dogmatically, and according to the judgment or certainty of faith. Now

good as in plain terms affirmed, that men bought by the Lord, viz. Christ, as all interpreters expound, may, yea, and that some will, “ bring upon themselves destruction.” If so, then evident it is that the Lord Christ bought with the price of his blood as well those who perish, and are destroyed by their own wickedness, as those that are saved; and consequently all men without exception.

That which is excepted against this interpretation and inference from the place, is very faint and

him: but if Christ buys men with the price of his blood only for slaves and vassals, I would know whether they come to the actual enjoyment of this privilege (for such it must needs be supposed, as by the context itself will appear presently), by faith, or without faith. It cannot be said that they come to the possession of it by faith, for by faith men are put into the blessed relation of sons: “Ye are all the children of God,” saith the apostle, “by faith in Jesus Christ,” Gal. 3:26. If they should come to it without faith, then Christ

as, for example, if Ishmael had been the natural son of Lot, he could not have been the natural son of Abraham. This is a proposition of a manifest and clear truth, yet both parts of it are false: for, 1. Ishmael was not the natural son of Lot. 2. He was the natural son of Abraham. Yet,

Again, if Christ bought some for slaves, then hath he some base, servile, hard, or drudgery work to do, such as is not meet for sons to put their hand unto, for they have no need of slaves that have no servile or

slavish work to do; but Christ hath no work to do but that which is honourable and worthy the most ingenuous of all his sons to do. “All the commandments of God,” David saith, “are righteousness,” Psal. 119:172. And a little before, “All thy commandments are truth,” ver 151. Now Christ hath no more work to be done by men in the world than God hath, neither hath God any more than what is expressed and set forth in his commandments, and all these, as we heard from

David, “are righteousness,” *i. e.* requiring nothing but what is righteous and just for men to do, and consequently meet for sons, yea, chiefly for sons, or righteous ones, to do. Yea, God hath no need of any man’s lie, or of any man’s sin whatsoever. Therefore neither did Christ buy any for slaves. Once more, If the persons here said to be bought by Christ, were bought by him for slaves, then must the apostle be conceived to extenuate their sin in denying him, by saying, that he bought them;

buying of them, that so we may compare them together? Doubtless that bondage and misery out of which these men can be supposed to be bought by Christ, is, in the utmost line and pitch of it, but an obnoxiousness or liableness to have been cast into hell-fire for their sin, committed in or contracted from Adam as soon as they were conceived or born, or the like; but that estate of slavery, whereinto (according to that interpretation of the place which we now oppose) they are bought, by being

bought by Christ, is seven times more grievous than so. For, 1. Under this they are as liable to be thrown into hell-fire as in the other. Nay, 2. They are sure to be cast into hell-fire with much more guilt of sin upon them, than in their former condition they were capable of, and consequently to be so much the more grievously tormented for ever. Therefore their sin of denying Christ is so far from being aggravated by their being bought by him for slaves, that indeed it is extenuated, and brought to

nothing by it; and, consequently, such an interpretation is diametrically opposite to the apostle's intent in the place.

Lastly, for this, If Christ bought the false teachers here spoken of, with other wicked men who in fine perish for slaves, in what respect or with what intentions may he be supposed to have bought such infants, who dying in their infancy, and before the committing of actual sin, are supposed through the want of the privilege of election to perish? Must we

not theirs: and they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years,” Gen. 15:13. And, 2. Though there be a sense, wherein all things are said to be theirs (the saints,) “All things are yours,” &c., 1 Cor. 3:22, &c., yet wicked men are in no other sense here said to be theirs, than that wherein Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, are said to be theirs. Therefore as it doth no ways argue, that Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, were bought by Christ for slaves, because they are here said to be the saints’, *i. e.* for their service and benefit, so

death was, whether God did not as truly, as really, as cordially intend the salvation of one man as another, considered as men, in or by Christ's death. That God, in his providential dispensations, putteth a difference between one man's spiritual opportunities and another's, doth at no hand argue any different intentions in Him towards the one and the other in Christ's death, but may flow from several other principles or causes, as either from a different use and improvement in men

of their original stocks of grace, or from different applications that have been made unto God by others, as in prayer, intercession, &c. in the behalf of some, in respect of others ; or from different respects borne by God to the parents or forefathers of some, in regard of their signal piety and serviceableness to his great name in their generations above others ; or lastly, from the wisdom of God in conjunction with his goodness in and about the government of the world, according unto which he judgeth it most

Thirdly. Whereas, the same author saith, “that it is one thing to die for the reprobate in some sense, and” (another, I suppose he means,) “to die for ‘them with an intention and purpose to save them. I verily believe that neither he nor any of his persuasion in the present controversy, are able to credit such a distinction, unless captiously and altogether irrelatively to the business in hand, understood either by the Scriptures or any solid reason. For I confess I am yet to learn where, in the

stand and be justified; but to say that he died for the salvation of such men, cannot by these principles and grounds be evinced. But in this sense the said distinction hath not yet been, nor, I believe, ever will be, in the latter member of it made orthodox or sound upon such terms.

The said author, in process of the same discourse, to save his bottle of hay or stubble from being burnt in the fire of the Scripture in hand, advanceth another distinction, every whit as

their sins upon such terms as to reserve a liberty unto himself of reversing or recalling that grant, in case of such or such an unworthiness in them afterwards. This I judge to be most orthodox and true, though not in relation to some men only, but with reference unto all, without exception, to whom God at any time granteth remission of sins in this world, (of which more before the close of this chapter,) yet this sense, I presume, no ways befriends the author's judgment in the

have procured or bought any other salvation to them, but only that which was fully and completely purchased and bought for them with the blood of Christ, without any dependence at all upon their faith. Therefore, unless we suppose that salvation was completely purchased for them by Christ in his death, we cannot say or suppose with truth, that in case they had believed, they should, without question, have been saved.

That which is behind, “And as they tasted of the

them. Besides, here to interpret that Christ died sufficiently for the persons spoken of, without supposing that he died intentionally also for them, is clearly to overthrow the apostle's intention in the words, and to turn his aggravation of the sin he speaks of, rather into an extenuation than otherwise. For he that shall pay that for the ease and benefit only of another, which was sufficient to have pleased and eased me also as well as him, and yet shall neglect me in such a payment, and leave me in

more than what he voluntarily put himself upon for the sake of others, to whom he was no whit more beholden or engaged than unto me. It is a palpably importune and senseless conceit, to think that men are engaged in any bands of thankfulness or service unto Christ for dying sufficiently for them, unless he died intentionally also.

The latter exposition of the last-named authors was, that the Lord Christ is said to have bought these false teachers, because they professed themselves to

have been bought by him. But, 1. Why do they not put such a gloss as this upon other places, where there is every whit as much reason to do it, as here ? As when Paul saith, “For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation,” 1 Thess; 5:9, &c. why do they not interpret here; “For God hath not appointed us,” &c. *i. e. we profess* that God hath not appointed us, &c. So, when the same apostle saith, “That God hath purchased the church with his own blood,” Acts 20:28, why do they not gloss here; “ God

professed themselves bought by him, they could not lightly teach or hold forth any doctrine wherein they should deny, either his Godhead, manhood, satisfaction, or any other thing relating to him, without which he could not, in a rational way, have made such a purchase of them. Or, 2. If they did teach any such doctrine, it must be supposed that they did it unwittingly, and because they apprehended nothing in it of any inconsistency with their profession of being bought by Christ. For it is not to be

But concerning the first of the places, most certain it is that there is no such notion to be found there. For that by the righteous, whom Christ saith that he came not to call to repentance, should be meant righteous only in show, *or* in the opinion of men, whether themselves or others, and not righteous truly and properly so called, contradicts the manifest and declared intentions of Christ's coming into the world, which are frequently avouched and found to be the calling of sinners of all sorts, kinds, and degrees

appearance of what they are called, or from the opinion of men judging them such; yet such a line of interpretation as this is not to be stretched over what Scriptures we please, nor indeed over any but where the manifest, exigency of the context calls for it. Otherwise we shall entitle men to a liberty of substituting shadows and appearances only, instead of realities and substances of truth, where and when they please; and so to turn the mind and counsels of God in the Scriptures upside down. The contest

of old between Hierome and Austin about Paul's reproving Peter, Gal. 2., is of notable consideration to the business in hand. Hierome pleaded, that when Paul reproved Peter at Antioch, he did it not seriously or in good earnest; but affirmed, that these two apostles out of a kind of prudent charity agreed to make a show of a contest between them, when as indeed there was none. But how gravely and copiously doth Austin declare against and argue down such a licentiousness of interpreting ? “ The

catachrestical
interpretation as this, they
are but few; and those
which are, must be
discerned and
distinguished from others
by the manifest exigency of
their respective scopes and
imports, the least jot or
tittle of which character is
not to be found in the place
in hand. For,

3. and lastly, Most evident
it is, as hath been formerly
also observed, and as many
expositors, more than
enough addicted to the
contra-remonstrant
opinion, themselves
acknowledge, that the

the contrary it be supposed, that he did not buy them with any intent to free them from their misery, but only make a show of such a thing, or only do that which might occasion men to think or to believe that he did so, this manifestly easeth and qualifies the guilt of their sin in denying him; and so is manifestly repugnant to the apostle's scope. For to make a show of love only, or to do that by which other men may be invited to think that a real kindness is done for such or such a man, when as indeed there is nothing

eased upon this account, that he did not indeed buy them with any such intent or desire, because, 1. Men are bound to judge, as they have reason to judge ; and, 2. Are bound to act or practise according to their judgments; I answer,

There can be no sufficient ground for any man to believe that which is false, nor ought such a thing to be believed; at least with confidence of belief, or with any such belief, upon which he shall stand bound to engage in any material and weighty action or practice. Therefore if Christ did not

certainly of returns with considerable gain, would the providence of God, and condition of human affairs bear it, would multiply merchants without end; and withal render those very weak and unlike men, who, having means and opportunity to follow such an employment, should either be slothful and sit still, or else dispose of their estates in any other way, wherein little or no improvement could be expected. In like manner, a certainty of knowledge that Christ truly and really bought a man with his

the denial or disowning of him, if not pardonable, yet much more excusable, and of far lighter provocation and demerit, than in the other case it would be.

Thus then at last we see, that no interpretation will sit with any tolerable closeness or congruity to the words and scope of the Scripture in hand, but only that which acknowledgeth the false teachers mentioned therein, truly, really, absolutely, and completely redeemed or bought by Christ, I mean after the same manner, and upon the same terms of

maintained in the present discourse. But for that which some plead against the interpretation asserted, from Revel, 14:4, where those that are said to be redeemed or bought GREEK, from men, are termed the first fruits unto God, and to the Lamb, and are said to follow the Lamb wheresoever he goeth, which implieth their actual salvation; the answer unto it is easy. For evident it is, from the description of the persons here spoken of, that they are such, not simply who were redeemed and bought by Christ, but

who also truly believed in him, and persevered in faith and love unto the end; and consequently such, in whom the work of redemption performed by Christ obtained its ultimate and plenary efficiency and end. In which respect they are said, in a kind of emphatical manner, to be GREEK, to have been redeemed, or bought, from men, or from amongst men, i. e. persons in whom the common redemption vouchsafed by Christ took place, and wrought to that great and signal differencing and

much as an appearance of any thing, in this Scripture, against that interpretation of the other, for the establishing of which, way hath been made through the fall of many others.

And doubtless he that shall attentively and with consideration read what Calvin himself hath commented upon the place, must needs judge him very compliant with the said interpretation. “Although,” saith he, “Christ may be denied several ways, yet, in my judgment, Peter means that which is expressed in Jude, viz., when the grace

heard him or shall read these things. Now if he should mean that either himself or other godly ones were redeemed with any other kind of redemption than that spoken of in the text before him, viz., wherewith the false teachers, there mentioned, were redeemed, his commentaries should be quite besides the text.

2. He saith expressly, that “they who, shaking off the bridle, cast themselves forward, or headlong, into all manner of licentiousness, are not without cause said to deny

freely giving the right hand of fellowship unto it.

We have been somewhat long in our vindication of the Scripture last argued; but the restless and endless importunity of men in persuading the Scriptures to entreat their darling error kindly, together with the difficulty of the Scriptures to be so persuaded, hath compelled us. But it is very incident to men to do by the Scriptures as they do by themselves. “God,” saith Solomon, “hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions,” Eccles.

7:29. So may it be truly said, that God hath made many Scriptures upright, plain, clear, obvious for sense and meaning ; but men are wont to seek out many inventions to perplex or misfigure this meaning, that it may not be known to oppose their fond conceits and imaginations.

The next Scripture of the consort designed for this chapter was 2 Pet. 2:20: “For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are entangled therein, and

unbelief. 2. To have been in the inward bent and frame of their minds and wills as much addicted to all other the pollutions hereof as at any time formerly. 3, and lastly, To have been all this while most damnable hypocrites and dissemblers. Now that the Holy Ghost should say, that unbelievers, persons inwardly full of all wickedness and filthiness, most vile hypocrites and dissemblers, have “escaped the pollutions of the world,” especially “through the knowledge” (or rather acknowledgment, GREEK)

deliverance from the pollutions of the world, their knowledge (or acknowledgment rather, which is somewhat more) of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, plainly evinceth it to have been such an escape, which is inward, cordial, and real, in conjunction with true sanctification, and not external, formal, or in show and pretence only. There is scarce any thing more frequent or familiar in the Scriptures than the ascribing of justification, sanctification, yea, and salvation itself to the knowledge, sometimes of

God, sometimes of Christ, sometimes of both. “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant” (saith Isaiah, speaking of Christ) “justify many, Isa. 53:11. “By his *knowledge*” i. e., as interpreters generally, by his being known. “He calls that,” saith Musculus, “the knowledge of Christ, not wherewith he himself knoweth, hut whereby he is known by us.” The apostle Paul speaks of the *knowledge* of the Son of God, as one of the principal ends of that evangelical ministry which was by special grace given unto

him,” 1 John 3:6. That of our Saviour himself to this purpose is well known, “This is life eternal, that they *know* thee the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ,” John 17:3. It were easy to multiply places of like import. Therefore certainly that obedience, that sanctification, that conformity in life and conversation to the word and will of God, which is begotten and raised in men by the knowledge, much more by the acknowledgment, or thorough knowledge

(which the word GREEK seems to import) of “ the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,” is cordial obedience, true and real sanctification, and conformity to the will of God.

3, and lastly, If the escape and deliverance from “the pollutions of the world” here spoken of, was not inward, real, and accompanied with true sanctification, &c., how could the persons be in danger of an after-entanglement therewith, especially of an inward entanglement, and

wherewith the heart should be ensnared, which yet the Holy Ghost evidently implieth they were, ver. 14, in ascribing unto them a “heart exercised with covetousness,” or of being overcome? at least, how should their conditions be rendered so much more grievous and dreadful by any such entanglement than they were under the escape, as the Holy Ghost here clearly supposeth? If the escape here mentioned, importeth not true and real sanctification, the persons escaping must of necessity be supposed, all the time of

this their escape, to have been “in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity,” and particularly to have been both hypocrites and unbelievers. Now our Saviour himself supposeth hypocrites and unbelievers to be the first-born children of hell, and of “the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for ever,” in those two sayings of his, compared, viz. Matt. 24:51, with Luke 12:46. The tenor of the former is this: “The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in

an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with *hypocrites*: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Of the latter, this: “The lord of that servant will cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with *unbelievers*.” If hypocrites and unbelievers be of the first and primary designation for hell and eternal destruction (which the said passages clearly import), they cannot lightly through any apostasy whatsoever contract any worse or more grievous

condition than their present condition is. The truth is, that I know no apostasy, of which a hypocrite or unbeliever is properly capable, but only that which is from Belial unto Christ, or from Satan unto God.

All that the adversaries of the interpretation given, (and who will not acknowledge the escape here mentioned to imply any thing more than a mere formal and outside sanctification,) are able to plead from the words or context for themselves, is only that which hath been

Calvin himself, it seems, was so far unsatisfied with it, that he could not own the interpretation attempted by it, but crosseth over the way to the other interpretation. “This,” saith he upon verse 22, “ is that in brief that Peter would say, that the Gospel is physic which purgeth us with a wholesome vomit, but withal that there are many dogs, who to their destruction, resorb or resume what they have vomited up. And again, that the Gospel is a laver, which washeth away all our

external, formal, hypocritical sanctification.

Another Scripture ranged in the same division with the former, is of much the same consideration with them. “ Of how much sorer punishment,” said the apostle, “ shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace ?” Heb. 10:29. To say that this Scripture, with the former, doth not speak of a true

and real sanctification, but of that only which is outsidely, seemingly; and hypocritically such, is to claim a mere arbitrary power for interpreting the Scriptures.

For, 1. The word here translated, “sanctification,” is the same with that which our Saviour useth, John 17:17, where in the behalf of his disciples he prayed thus unto his Father, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is the truth.” If neither reason nor religion suffereth us here to interpret that Christ prayed unto the Father to sanctify

this interpretation are many, 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Eph. 5:25, 26 ; Heb. 13:12, &c.

3. There is this reason evincing with a high hand that the Scripture before us speaketh of an inward, real, and soul sanctification, viz. that the sin of the person here said to have been sanctified, in counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, *i. e.* in despising or profaning it, is aggravated by this consideration, that he was sanctified by it. The carriage of the verse clearly, and above all contradiction, evinceth

this. Now, then, if we shall suppose that this person had received no more good, no greater benefit by this blood of the covenant, but only to be made an hypocrite or a dissembler by it, which must be affirmed, if the sanctification here attributed unto him be only a feigned or formal sanctification ; this is so far from aggravating that sin of his in despising it, that it doth very much, if not altogether, extenuate and excuse it.

Nor can it be here pretended, with reason,

this kind than otherwise, to consider that though this blood of the covenant be a very efficacious and proper means to make me sound-hearted and sincere, yet it is not so efficacious and powerful in this kind as actually to subdue and overcome the hypocrisy and wickedness of my soul, without mine own endeavours in concurrence with it. Therefore, certainly the apostle would never instance in a counterfeit, unsound, or imperfect sanctification, wrought or occasioned by the blood of the covenant, to aggravate

not that they should be really and internally sanctified, or, in fine, saved by it; I answer,

1. That the strength of this objection hath been already trodden down in this chapter. 2. I here add, that if God intended an external sanctification only, by the death of Christ, for the persons mentioned in the objection, then were his intentions in Christ's death, in reference to these men, rather grievous than gracious; bent upon the aggravation and increase of their condemnation, not upon the advance of their

more than a righteous, blameless, innocent, Christian conversation, issuing from an inward principle suitable to it ? If it be said, No, Christ did not intend by his death to procure for these men any such inward principle as you speak of, but only that outward conformity to, the ways and laws of Christian religion, then it will follow that Christ died with an intention to make men hypocrites, or to procure hypocrisy for men; because a fair show in outward practices and religious deportments, without an

understand this, that the interpretation asserted, and which understands the Scripture in hand of a true and real sanctification, is no slip of remonstrantism, but attested by very orthodox men, as the word now ruleth. Calvin himself writeth nothing upon the place but of good accord with it. “By a comparison of the benefits,” saith he, speaking of what men received by Moses under the law, and what Christians now under the gospel receive by Christ, “he aggravates the ingratitude of men. It is a

sanctification which appertains to a son or child of God. “God,” saith he, “hath made thee a son; and wilt thou be willing to be made a servant?”

The last of the Scriptures produced, to prove that Christ died even for those also who perish, as well as others, was Matt, 18:32, 34. The tenor and carriage of this is of like consideration with the three last opened: excepting only, that whereas those speak of sanctification, this speaks of justification. The passages now to be insisted on lie in the body of a

parable, which is somewhat large: the reader may please to peruse the whole in the evangelist. The particulars in it for our purpose are contained in these words. “ Then his Lord, after he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou, also, have had compassion on thy fellow- servant, even as I had pity on thee ? And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him.

you, notwithstanding any privilege you may seem to have above other men, by being my disciples; he will neither deal better nor worse with you, but just as this lord did by that wretched and most unthankful servant of his, if you provoke him after the same manner, *i. e.* “if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” That great grace of forgiveness of sins, under which you now stand, will be reversed and called in again, by him that hath given it you, if you shall so far tread and

trample the glory of it under your feet, as not in consideration and acknowledgment of the greatness of it, to be open and free-hearted in forgiving one another such injuries and trespasses as are done to you. This is the righteous and royal way of that God with the world, “who,” as Peter saith, “without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man’s work.”

I shall not need, I suppose, to caution that which hath been delivered upon this account, with any such item or explication as

this: that it was far from our Saviour's intent to threaten, either his apostles, Or any other man, that they should incur the sore judgment mentioned, the loss of the forgiveness of sins, or be cast into the prison of hell, by every passionate or sudden heat conceived against a man upon a provocation, or offence given. If this were so, the whole world of saints, in a manner, might cry out, as the apostles, upon occasion of another doctrine taught by Christ, sometimes did, "Who then can be saved?" But his

of stock, or original donation. So that the gifts and calling of God are not in this sense without repentance. Therefore,

2. When the apostle affirms the gifts and calling of God to be without repentance, his meaning may be, 1. That he never gives any thing to any person or people whatsoever, but that he knows and considers beforehand, all the inconveniences and disaccommodations that will follow upon it, either in reference to his own glory, or to his creature, one or other, in any kind.

God and such men, who having once obtained remission of sins from him by such a faith, which wrought, or was apt and ready to work by love, afterwards upon the loss or degeneration of this faith, together with the operativeness of contrary and vile principles, are divested by him of that great and glorious privilege, and fall back into their former estate of condemnation.

Therefore, from those quarters of the parable in Matthew which we have lately surveyed, perfect

remission of sins by his death for those, who notwithstanding, may through their own folly and wickedness perish.

Chrysostom interprets the place in full consonancy with this inference or supposition.

“Although,” saith he, “the graces and gifts of God are without repentance, yet malice or wickedness prevailed so far as to dissolve this law. What then is there of more grievous consequence, than to remember injuries which appear to be a subverter, or destroyer, of such and so

great a gift of God?" Amongst our later expositors, Musculus, as orthodox as men can make a man, advanceth the same interpretation, making it his third observation upon the place, "that those sins which are, through the grace of God, pardoned at present, shall not be remitted in the future, unless we will forgive our brother. For it is an unjust thing," saith he, "that he should enjoy the free remittance, or forgiveness of a debt of ten thousand talents, who refuseth to forgive his brother a debt of

and unfeignedly.” A little after, “to these men their sins were remitted in a sort in this world,” &c. If he would have brought forth his darkness of inchoately, upon condition, in a sort, into a clear and perfect light, his meaning must have been, that that remission of sins which God gives unto men in this world, he “neither confirms unto them in the hour of death, nor in the day of judgment,” the author’s own words a little after the former, in case they live and die under an implacableness or

unmercifulness of spirit towards those who injure them. Such a sense as this is truly orthodox, whether men vote it such or no. Our English annotators, though they neither buy nor sell this interpretation in expressness of terms, yet interpretatively they buy or confirm it. "This parable," say they upon verse 35, "informs us that they shall find God severe and implacable that do not forgive their brethren, although they have been diversely and grievously injured by them." In these words they clearly suspend

occasioned by the contents of this chapter.

CHAPTER 9.

Containing a digression about the commonly received Doctrine of Perseverance, occasioned by several passages in the preceding chapter, wherein the benefit and comfort of that doctrine, which teacheth a possibility of the saints' declining even to destruction, is avouched and clearly evicted, above

the other.

NOTWITHSTANDING the frequently experienced truth of the common saying, “pessimus consiliarius timor,” fear is a very bad counsellor, yet is it very incident to the natures of men never to think themselves wiser than in their fears, nor to be more importunately wedded to any apprehensions than those which they conceive to be sovereign for the prevention of evil. With what height of confidence and unrelentingness of

he made not a body of it, he should make nothing at all of it. The ancient Jews, Mr. Brightman affirmeth it, held it not meet for young men to read the book of the Canticles, out of a fear they would receive harm by it. Mercer likewise relates, that the ancient wise men of this nation judged it best to restrain the common people from reading the book of Ecclesiastes, out of a conceit that it both contradicted itself, and other parts of Scripture likewise. Luther, it is sufficiently known, rejected the Epistle, of James, out of

them, if not universally, yet generally, and with very few cases of exception, to be these, with their fellows, negligence and slothfulness in watching over their hearts and ways, omission of known duties, formality in services, unprofitableness in their course and callings, non-proficiency in grace; and especially the frequent prevailings and breakings out of base corruptions, vile affections, noisome lusts, &c. Therefore what doctrine soever is, in the native frame and constitution of it, apt to

who do truly believe ; so that there is nothing gotten by that pretence howsoever. But,

2. If there be any persons under heaven who may, upon sufficient grounds, and justifiable by the word of God, be judged true believers, many of those apostates we speak of were to be judged such. All the visible lineaments of a true faith were in their faces. As far as the eye of man is able to pierce, they lived “godlily, righteously, and soberly in this present world.” Doth any true believer act zealously for

thing which is spiritually and excellently good, is of no such value, unless first it be excellently enlightened with the knowledge of the nature, properties, and condition of that of which it testifieth:: and, 2. Be in the actual contemplation, consideration, or remembrance of what it knoweth in this kind when it rendereth such testimony. Now, there are, I question not, many thousands, both of men and women in the world, who truly believe, and whose hearts are upright with God, who yet are not

to any such degree enlightened about the natures and properties either of a true faith or uprightness of heart, but that the testimony which their consciences give concerning these is liable to many disputes and questions about the certainty and truth of it in the consciences themselves which give it. This is the constant and known experience of, in a manner, the whole believing world; there being not one amongst many of the inhabitants hereof, the testimony of whose

conscience touching the soundness of his faith is upon any such terms, or to any such degree, either comforting or cheering, but that he conflicts with many fears, and scruples, and doubtful apprehensions notwithstanding.

2. The comfortableness and cheeringness of the testimony which any man's conscience gives touching the soundness of his faith and the uprightness of his heart towards God, depending mainly and principally upon the uniform, regulate, and constant tenor of his life

same. The credit and authority of that testimony which any man's conscience gives in unto him touching the truth and soundness of his faith, must needs in a very great measure depend upon the equable flowings or issuings forth hereof in ways and works of righteousness; because when there is any considerable interruption in these, that testimony will be suspended and put to silence for the time, unless the conscience itself be under the power of some delusion. This is evident

be either the one or the other, who is neither. This is chiefly spoken, and is accordingly to be understood, concerning a man's judging of himself. Whereas he adds, "he that doth righteousness is righteous," it is to be understood emphatically and exclusively; so that "he," and he only, "who doth righteousness," is to be judged a righteous man, the Scripture frequently expressing itself after the same manner. See Isa. 66:2; Gal. 3:12; John 3:16. Now, by "doing righteousness," he doth not

mean the doing of some righteous acts now and then, but a constant and uniform practice of righteousness, human frailties only excepted, which come not into this account; for in the writings of this apostle, as GREEK, 1 John 3:8, 9, usually, if not constantly, signifies, as it were, to follow a trade or course of sinning, to sin with the like frequency and dexterity that a tradesman works upon his ordinary calling or occupation: so doth GREEK, 1 John 2:29; 3:10; and so GREEK, 1 John 1:6; John 3:21; and

GREEK, John 7:17; 9:31, &c. signify a proportionable acting of righteousness, and of the truth, and of the will of God. Now, if no man can or ought, upon Scripture grounds, to be judged a righteous man or sound believer but only he who doth or worketh righteousness upon such terms as these, evident it is, that in what degree men fall short of these terms in working righteousness, the testimony of their consciences touching the soundness of their faith and uprightness of their hearts towards God must

faith, and not true believers indeed, whose righteousness and fruitfulness of conversation by many degrees exceeded mine, am I not strongly hereby occasioned, yea, engaged, to question the truth and soundness of mine own faith ? especially considering, as hath been said, that the evidence of the truth and reality of every man's faith depends so much upon the fruitfulness and operativeness of it in ways and works of righteousness.

The premises duly

speaking of were never so comfortable, yet this would be no argument of the truth or goodness of it, unless the comfortableness of it be found in due consistence with the wisdom and righteousness of God. It were easy to invent twenty doctrines every whit as comfortable (nay much more comfortable) as this, in respect of the natures and imports of them, which yet will be found notoriously defective in point of truth, because they hold not any regular proportion with those attributes of God. As for

But as those doctrines with their fellows, are not to be commended, nor entertained for their sweetness' or comfortableness' sake, having no approbation or countenance from God in his word; so neither is the common doctrine of perseverance at all to be regarded for any thing of like accommodation, I mean for any thing sweet or comfortable in it, unless the stamp of Divine authority could be shown upon it, which by no light yet extant is to be seen.

2. Though doctrines and

however escape the wrath and vengeance which is to come, yea, though it disporteth itself in all manner of looseness and licentiousness in the meantime. For this is the spirit that speaks to that doctrine.

That it is no ways comforting or strengthening to the spirit, or spiritual and regenerate part of a man, but rather fulsome and importune, is evident from hence, because a man, so far as he is regenerate and spiritual, desires not, wisheth not heaven, or salvation itself,

spiritual and bom of God,
valueth opportunities of
sinning no more than an
angel: nor desireth
continuance in the love and
favour of God, upon any
other terms or conditions
than such on which the
Lord Christ himself, as it
seems, enjoyed it. “If ye
keep my commandments,
ye shall abide in my love:
even as I have kept my
Father’s commandments,
and abide in his love,” John
15:10. So then evident it is
that the new man taketh no
pleasure, rejoiceth not in
any such doctrine, which
ensures either

himself, Matt. 16:22, I mean an offence; or what those Christians were unto Paul, of whom he complained that they brake his heart with weeping, Acts 21:13. For it secretly whispers and suggests unto it such things, the nature and proper tendency whereof is to scatter what the spirit had gathered, to dissolve and break the strength of those holy purposes and resolutions wherewith the regenerate part hath harnessed and armed itself against temptations unto evil. When the new man in a

foundation and
ground-work of such a
resolution, which was the
sense and apprehension of
the great danger of being a
castaway in case his body
was not kept under ? Or
suppose a man should
argue, and conclude thus
within himself, I will labour
with my hands, that I may
have whereof both to
subsist honestly and to do
good unto others, would
not such a suggestion as
this to him, that he shall
have that which will be
abundantly sufficient for
both purposes, whether he
laboureth with his hands or

renders this end attainable without the performance of this action. He that shall persuade me to love such or such a man by telling me, that whether I love him or no, yet he will deal lovingly and friendly by me, should not persuade me to love him by an argument or motive of so much strength, as he that should move me to the same point thus: If you love him, he will deal very lovely and friendly with you; but if you shall neglect, or voluntarily injure him, you will find him a sore enemy. There is no action, how

to persuade them
thereunto. 3. As certain it
is, as either of the former,
that an assurance of the
love of God towards them
against all sin and
wickedness whatsoever
that they are capable of
committing, is a motive
every whit as taking with,
as suitable and pleasing to
natural and carnal men, (if
yet a motive it be,) as to
spiritual and holy men, to
persuade them to the love
of God. Therefore, if God
hath not thought meet to
afford such a motive as this
is unto natural or carnal
men, it is no ways likely

possibility of being made a reprobate, or castaway, “Lest,” said he, “having preached unto others, I myself should prove or become a castaway,” 1 Cor. 9:27. Yet at what an excellent rate and height of comfort, yea of joy unspeakable and glorious did he live? “I am persuaded,” saith he, “that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of

in vouchsafing unto them so rich and full a proportion of means as he doth, whereby to persevere accordingly. Thus then we see, that the doctrine of falling away, teaching only a possibility hereof, and so of perishing, is no doctrine of uncomfortableness, nor necessarily occasioneth the least fear in men of falling away, or of perishing.

2. Suppose, for argument's sake, the doctrine of perseverance should be subscribed unto, and that absolute assurance of salvation granted unto believers, which this

through my own bowels, or by casting myself headlong from some high tower, or by taking poison, known to he for such beforehand, with the like; would I not upon the matter be as well satisfied with such a conditional leave or grant as this, as with one that should be absolute, and wherein my life should be assured unto me against all possible attempts to be made by myself to destroy it? Doubtless, if it were simply long life which I desired, the former grant would be as satisfactory unto me as the latter.

unto, than in that which the doctrine of falling away, or of conditional perseverance indulgeth unto the saints, but only a liberty or fearlessness of sinning. And whether men may not be of a free, ingenuous, and son-like spirit, without a liberty or boldness of sinning; yea, whether such a liberty as this will consist with that spirit, I freely refer to the determination of *any* man, who hath been never so little baptized into the spirit, whereby the saints cry, Abba, Father.

3. That doctrine which is efficacious and proper to

of inward troubles, fears, and perplexities of soul, hath been already argued in this chapter; and besides, is nothing but what the daily experience of too many sealeth unto for truth. 3.2. It hath been likewise brought forth into a clear light, that the doctrine of absolute perseverance is of as pregnant and dangerous a calculation as a doctrine lightly can be, to cause the lives and ways of men to abound with those unclean issues we speak of. Therefore, 3.3., and lastly, I here add, That the contrary doctrine, I mean of

hath prescribed in order thereunto, I mean for the enabling of men to persevere, it mightily cheereth, fortifieth, and strengtheneth the spirit in men who desireth, as hath been proved, neither perseverance, nor salvation itself, upon any other terms than these, and rejoiceth above measure, that upon these they may, and shall most assuredly be bad; and on the other band, by teaching that by looseness, profaneness, negligence, in the use of means, &c. there may be an apostatising to perdition, it sorely rebukes

apprehend and judge in the case, I do not find the spirit of holiness to breathe with that authority, heat, or excellency of power in the writings of the latter, which I am very sensible of in the writings of the former. These call for righteousness, holiness, and all manner of Christian conversation with every whit as high a hand as the other, and add nothing to check, obstruct, or enfeeble the authority of their demands in this kind; whereas the other; though they be sore many times in their exhortations and

who shall please to acquaint themselves with them, cannot, without much opposition from their consciences, deny it. We shall, God willing, give some light of proof to this assertion in the 15th chapter of this discourse.

2. Concerning the persons signally, I suppose, aimed at for the confirmation of the said experiment on the right hand, as Calvin, Musculus, P. Martyr, Bucer, with other protestant divines of like note and name with them; together with such of our English ministers and other

the saints even to the losing of the soul. And for the latter, I mean the English ministers, and those mentioned with them, there is the like consideration of these also. The works of such of them as have written, bewray them to have had both the nations we speak of in their womb; in which works or writings of theirs, if they speak one word for a necessity of perseverance in the saints, it is ten to one but they speak another for a possibility of such a defection, which is never accompanied with

bom, and so to have the precedence of Jacob in worldly honours, in respect of time, though at last his "mountain and his heritage was laid waste" for ever, Mal. 1:3, 4; so it seemed good to the providence of God, that, of the doctrinal twins we speak of, striving together in the wombs of the minds and judgments of those men now under consideration, that of perseverance should first lift up its head in the world and he applauded; making no question, withal, hut that the time is a coming, yea, and is even at the door,

in the judgments of the most conscientious ministers amongst us, though the stream of their professions runs in opposition hereunto, and withal, what principles they clearly and frequently hold forth, especially in the applicatory parts of their sermons; I am easily induced to believe that, as by the authority of one man, or some few, the profession of such a judgment came in upon them and surprised them, so, likewise, they want nothing in order to the profession of a change of

experience therein averred, on the left hand, who, I suppose, were the worst of our late bishops, such as Romanized and tyrannized most amongst them, together with their clergy creatures and favourites, who were generally inclined to the doctrine of falling away, and withal, took more liberty in their lives than men truly religious ought to have done; my answer is,

1. That, as was said concerning the godliness of the other, that it did not necessarily flow from the doctrine of perseverance,

either as held or professed by them, so neither did that looseness or unworthiness in any kind, which was found in these, necessarily, no, nor so much as probably, arise from that opinion concerning the possibility of a total and final defection of the saints professed by them. They held other principles more than enough, sufficient to teach them all that irregularness and unrighteousness of conversation which can with truth be charged on them; so that neither the good nor the bad, neither

the godly nor the ungodly deportments of persons professing such or such particular doctrines, principles, or opinions, are any demonstrative, no, nor yet so much as any dialectical or probable arguments, either of truth or error in them. The scribes and pharisees were full of all hypocrisy and unrighteousness, yet did they hold and teach many doctrines that were sound, insomuch that the Lord Christ himself commanded his own disciples to observe and do whatsoever they taught as necessary to be

and some of the other of those opinions, who have quitted themselves upon far better terms of honour and approbation in their lives than many Christians, professors of the last opinion, have done. It is the observation of a great learned man of this nation, “Atheism did never perturb states; for it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no further; and we see the times inclined to atheism, as the time of Augustus Caesar, and our own times in some countries, were and are civil times.” 2. There is, I

suppose, a plain reason to be given why that generation of men now under discourse (the popish gang of bishops, with the clergy adoring them for preferment-sake) should, in order to the promoting of their secular interest, take up the doctrine which opposeth the common received doctrine of perseverance; together with those other doctrines, commonly, but I know not how properly or deservedly, called Arminian. It is sufficiently known that the men we speak of were professed

their interest and repute with the generality of the people, or at least with all those that were intelligent, and in that respect considerable. To this end, wisely considering that nothing was like to prejudice them more in their esteem with such men, than to detect them of error and unsoundness in their doctrine, and perceiving withal, as with half an eye they might, being so fully disengaged, as they were, from all high thoughts of those who held them, that they were not in any doctrines besides,

winter, would in time make
a proverb of as much truth.
But though enough hath
been said to evince and
maintain the innocency of
the doctrine under
protection, in respect of
any violation of, or
intrenchment upon the
inward peace and comfort
of the saints, yea, and
more, I am certain, than
can with good reason be
gainsaid; yet prejudice, I
know, is restless, and
thoughts of any long
standing in the minds of
men hardly removed.
Therefore it is like,
notwithstanding all that

and power must the
propension and inclination
of the heart and soul needs
be thereunto. So that if, 1.
There be worth and
goodness sufficient in any
object whatsoever to bear
it; and, 2. If a man be in a
capacity of discovering and
apprehending this good
clearly; and, 3. Be in a like
capacity of revising or
considering this his vision
as oft as he pleaseth,
certainly he is in a capacity
and at liberty to work
himself to what strength or
degree of desire and
inclination towards it he
pleaseth. Now, evident and

certain it is to every man, or else easily may be, 1. That there is more good in abstaining from things, either eminently dangerous or apparently destructive to his soul, than in forbearing things apparently destructive to his natural being. 2. As evident it is that every man is capable of attaining, or coming to the certain knowledge of, and of clearly apprehending this excess of good to him in the former above the latter. 3. Neither is it a thing less evident than either of the former, that every man is as capable of

Rom. 11:20. This fear is nothing else but a humble reflection upon a man's own weakness and insufficiency to stand in his own strength, which necessarily draweth along with it a humble dependence upon God for strength whereby to stand, together with an acknowledgment of strength, received from him when and whilst he doth stand. This is evident from that of the apostle: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," *i. e.* with humility, with a sense and

for this doctrine, as hath been shown, scarce suffereth any man to believe upon any rational, competent, or sufficient grounds that he is a true saint or believer, yea, and doth little less than tempt him to such things which are exceeding apt and likely to fill him with fears and questionings touching the truth of his faith. And what great comfort can it then be unto him to hear or believe that true believers cannot fall away or perish? whereas the other doctrine leaveth them a good latitude of competent

ground whereon to judge themselves true saints and true believers: nor doth it deprive them of sufficient ground on which to secure themselves both against the danger and against all fear of danger of apostatising or falling away to perdition. This doctrine, therefore, of the two, is questionless of the more benevolous aspect and influence upon the peace and comforts of the saints.

CHAPTER 10.

A continuation of the

former digression; wherein the texts of Scripture commonly alleged to prove the impossibility of saints' declining unto death, are taken into consideration, and discharged from that service.

BEING occasioned, and, after a sort, necessitated, for the securing of some passages of interpretation, (chap, 8.) being of main concernment to the principal cause undertaken in this discourse, to engage home in the question about

perseverance, I should, according to ordinary method, and that hitherto observed in the traverse of the main doctrine, first, have argued my sense and judgment in the question GREEK, assertively; and then GREEK, *i. e.* by answering such objections, whether from Scripture or otherwise, which are wont to be levied by men of contrary judgment in opposition thereunto. But finding by experience that weaker men, through too much fulness and abundance, in their own sense, in matters of

of the river of Thames, as it is like there is not, which was in it seven years since, yet is it one and the same river which it was then: and so put the case there be not one person now alive in any of the companies in London of which they respectively consisted forty years since, yet are they the self same companies which they were then. So, then, the saying of Christ; that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church,” may stand clear and firm, though many particular members thereof should be overcome. Therefore there

built upon the rock he speaks of, by faith, as, by reason of their most formidable strength, they are like to have over all other men. According to this interpretation, his meaning only is, that those that shall continue firmly built upon him by faith shall in time be rescued and delivered out of the hand of all adverse powers, yea, from death and the grave themselves, the most formidable of all others.

This exposition fully accords with what Chrysostom hath upon the place. “If,” saith he,

paraphrasing the words of Christ, “they shall not prevail against it, (‘my church,’) much more shall they not prevail against me. Therefore, be not troubled when thou shalt hear that I shall be betrayed and crucified.” These words clearly imply, that by “the prevailing of the gates of hell,” the author understands the final prevailing of death or the grave; and not the prevailing of Satan by subtlety or temptations in one kind or other.

Amongst our late
Protestant divines,

Cameron, who commonly
Strikes as happy a stroke in
opening the Scriptures
which he undertakes as any
man, doth not only deliver,
but with a high hand
asserts, argues, and
evinceth this
interpretation. “This then,”
saith he, “seems to have
been the mind of Christ in
this place: Let those who
believe, lie for a time dead,
let death have dominion
over them, let death
exercise his right (or
execute his law) upon
them, hold them fast shut
up in the grave, as in a
prison, bound with bands

or fetters, yet shall he not always have his will over them; he may or shall do much against them, but shall never have a full conquest over them.” This exposition he confirms, 1, by instancing several other places of Scripture, as Job 38:17; Psa. 9:13; 108:18; in all which, by “the gates of hell,” or of death, is clearly meant the grave. To which he adds, Psa. 18:16, and 116:3, as places of affinity with these. 2. By showing that the word GREEK, here translated hell, is never in Scripture, except once, used to signify hell,

properly so called, *i. e.* the place or state of the damned, but constantly, either the grave, or the state and condition of those that are dead. 3. By minding us that GREEK and GREEK, the grave and death, are elsewhere termed the enemies of the church, yea, the last enemies, as 1 Cor. 15:26 ; to which he adds, the consideration of their being “cast into the lake of fire,” Rev. 20:14.

4. And lastly, by particular arguments against every other interpretation offered by expositors.

Musculus, though by the gates of hell he understands as well the policy as power and strength of the devil, yet by the relative particle GREEK, it, he doth not understand the church, but the rock, or foundation of doctrine on which the church is built. So that his sense of the place seems to be this: that that doctrine on which the church is built is so firm and strong, that all the policy and power of Satan, though joining together, shall never be able to prevail against it, so as either to evict it of

over them notwithstanding. So that this passage of Scripture perfectly sembleth with these and the like: “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die,” John 11:25. And again: “And this is the Father’s will that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day,” John 6:39. See also John 5:25, 28, 29, &c.

That which is pleaded by some for such a sense of the

against it,” is not whatsoever opposeth the building of his church upon the rock, but whatsoever opposeth the happiness of it being so built, and adhering constantly and perseveringly unto him. For the pronoun relative GREEK, it, doth not relate to the verb GREEK, I will build, but to the substantive GREEK, church.

2. Whereas, in the said proposition, Christ’s building of his church, is expounded by the constant adhering of his church unto him, that which is the

principal thing in question is taken for granted: which is very inargumentative. For the matter in question is, whether the church of Christ, in all the members of it once built upon the rock, must, or doth necessarily so adhere to him.

3, and lastly, The said exposition renders a sense very preposterous and importune. For upon this account, Christ should speak at no better rate of reason than thus: “The gates of hell shall not prevail,” *i. e.* the subtlety, policy, and machinations of

interpretation given is this: If by the “prevailing of the gates of hell,” be meant nothing else but the eternal condemnation of, or perpetual prevailing of death against the church, then Christ here promiseth nothing, but only in the behalf of those that are dead; and consequently nothing but what may stand with a total defection of his church on earth. But this seems to be contrary to his intention in the place, ergo. I answer,

1. It is no inconvenience to suppose or grant that Christ in this place, and in

the promise here mentioned, doth not insure the perpetual continuance or residence of a church on earth, no more than he doth in many promises which are yet of very high and blessed importance in their respective kinds. In that great evangelical promise, “Whosoever believes shall be saved,” there is nothing but what may possibly stand with an universal defection of a church on earth; yet is the promise great and precious. It were easy to instance many others of like nature. But,

but consider and quit themselves like men, to replenish the earth with a generation of believers like unto the waters of a river, which fail not. Therefore,

3. and lastly, It is not truly said that this promise, "And the gates of hell shall not," &c., in the sense asserted, relates only to those that are dead. The truth is, that if we speak properly, neither this nor any other promise whatsoever relates only, if at all, unto the dead, or is made only on the behalf of the dead: the dead, in propriety of speech, are

utterly incapable of promises, though, not of performances of promises. But clearly this, and all other promises, are made to the living, and for their accommodation and comfort, though for the letter and reality of the performance of them they are not to be partakers hereof, until they have undergone the state and condition of death. It is just matter of joy unspeakable and glorious to him that is yet living to know and consider, that though he dieth, yet death shall not have any such dominion

kingdom of Christ, except they repent” [or he converted.] Doubtless they who, having once truly believed, become afterwards incapable of having part in the kingdom of Christ without conversion or repentance, give a loud testimony that there is no impossibility for true saints or true believers to be deceived, and that to the highest and most dangerous pitch of all.

If it be here said, Yea, but the Scripture in hand is to be understood of a final deceiving, or of a being deceived unto destruction ;

and thus (it is there supposed that) the elect cannot possibly be deceived, I answer,

1. This is to presume, not to argue or believe ; for there is not the least ground, or so much as the smallest sand, in either the words or context, whereon to build such an interpretation as this.

2. The abettors of this interpretation are wont to prove from the words not only an impossibility that the saints should finally be deceived, but also that they should be deceived totally, *i. e.* so as to be at any time

wholly destitute or bereft of that faith which is justifying and saving.

3, and lastly, The same men suppose, that if the saints may fall away totally at any time, they may fall away finally also. If it be said, that they cannot fall away totally ; I answer, if so, then one of these three things must needs follow; either, 1. That true, saving, and justifying faith may stand, not only with heresy, and this in fundamental articles of Christian religion, but even with an express abnegation and abjuration of Christ himself with his

religion; or else, 2. That their opinion is false who affirm that true believers may possibly fall, both into such heresy and such abnegation; or, 3, and lastly, That they who do fall both into the one or the other, are not seduced or deceived. This last is manifestly false: the second is the sense and confession of our adversaries themselves, viz. that true believers may fall into such heresy and abnegation. For the first, if saving faith may stand with such heresy and abnegation of Christ as is there spoken of, how will

3. Further to demonstrate the nullity of the aforesaid deduction from the place in hand, it is to be known and considered that this phrase or expression, GREEK, “if it be possible,” doth not always, if at any time, import the impossibility of a thing, but only the difficulty of a thing on the one hand, and the exquisite diligence and endeavours of those on the other hand, in respect of such difficulty, who attempt it. Thus, the evangelist Luke, speaking of Paul, saith, that “he hasted, GREEK, *if it were possible* for him to be at

as lieth between a possibility and impossibility of the thing, I must borrow some other man's fancy to conceive. However, let the apostle suffer the disparagement of such an ignorance as this, yet neither will this evince an impossibility of his being at Jerusalem by Pentecost to be here implied by this phrase, GREEK, “if it be possible,” but only some doubtfulness or difficulty in the thing, together with his utmost endeavour to compass it notwithstanding. In the like sense the same clause is

4:15, in neither of which places can it reasonably be supposed to import an impossibility. But,

4. Touching the place in hand, that here it only imports a difficulty, as hath been said, of deceiving the elect, *i. e.* believers, together with the most raised and vehement intentions or desires in the false prophets to effect it notwithstanding, appears yet more plainly from the evangelist Mark, who records the same passage thus : “For false Christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall show signs and

wonders, GREEK, *to seduce*, if it were possible, the very elect,” Mark 13:22, *i. e.* with an intent, raised out of great and strong desires, to draw off believers themselves from adhering unto the true Christ and Messiah, born of the Virgin, and to follow and embrace them in his stead. Yea, it is no ways like, but that they had a far greater desire to practise their seducing arts upon these, and to draw these after them, than any other sort of men; because these had set up and upheld such a competitor with them in

the world, who was like to carry away the world from them, unless they could prevail with his followers to disown and disclaim him. The great difficulty which was in the primitive times, and whilst these false Christs rose up one after another in the world, to work off believers from the true Christ, appears in part by that proverbial saying in Galen, “ A man may sooner unteach men Christianity or, teach men away from Christ. And Austin somewhere reports that a man, repairing to Apollo s oracle to inquire what

plainly shows that a faith built upon signs and wonders is rash and inconsiderate, and such as is easy for false Christs" (to attempt or procure).

5. If the phrase, GREEK, if it be possible, shall here be conceived to import an absolute impossibility, the necessity, efficacy, and power of the Lord Christ's prediction, and caution, will fall to the ground. For he who would have those to whom he speaketh certainly to believe that they are elect, and again, to believe also that it is a thing impossible for the elect to

them alive.

That which is commonly pleaded at such turnings as this, is very light and impertinent. “God,” say our antagonists, “as he wills the end, so also he willeth and enjoineth the means for the accomplishment of the end. So in the particular in hand; Christ, as he willeth the non-seduction of the elect, so he willeth also that they should beware of seducers, as a means tending to that end.” For to this we answer,

1. Though it be very true that God, who willeth the end, willeth and

prescribeth the means also, viz. when he declares the end not to be otherwise attainable, than in and by the use of such means as he prescribeth in order hereunto; yet when he hath irreversibly decreed that the end shall certainly be obtained, or that he will interpose by a high and irresistible hand for the effecting of it, and withal hath declared either the one or the other, or both of these his decrees unto the world, it is now no ways consistent with his wisdom to enjoin men the use of any means for the

conditional, and the meaning of it only this, “there shall be no loss of any man’s life amongst you,” viz. if you will follow the counsel of God for your preservation, and not destroy your lives yourselves by rejecting it. There is nothing more frequent in Scripture than hypothetical promises in categorical forms; I mean, than conditional promises delivered in positive or absolute terms. But hereof we shall have frequent occasion to take knowledge in the present discourse.

2. Though God, who willeth

but what he is pleased to do, or what he hath decreed to do out of the counsel and liberty of his will. And that which we affirm and plead in the cause depending, is not that God is not able to determine the wills of the elect to the use of means proper and sufficient to prevent their being deceived, hut that he hath nowhere declared himself willing or resolved to do it; and consequently, that it is an GREEK, a conceit above what is written, to think that he doth it. Therefore, until it be proved, either from the Scriptures, or by

shall endure to the end shall be saved,” Matt. 24:13, viz. against all opposition and contradiction of impediments whatsoever. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,” Rev. 2:10. So with that lately opened, “Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” Matt. 16:18; to which you may add, John 10:18, 19; Eph. 1:19, with many others.

This exposition perfectly accords with Bullinger’s commentary upon the

themselves incapable of such his preservation, by apostatising from that faith in his Son Jesus Christ, which he by his especial grace hath planted in them, and by which they stand at present in favour and acceptation with him.

2. Though God hath not simply and absolutely undertaken for their perseverance or continuation of their faith unto the end, nor upon any such terms, but that if they will be brutishly and desperately careless of so high a concernment to themselves as a blessed

frequent or familiar in Scripture than to ascribe the effects themselves, sometimes unto God, sometimes unto men, only upon their respective actings or doings of such things which are of a natural, proper, and direct tendency to produce them, whether they be actually and de facto produced or no. Thus our Saviour chargeth him, who shall put away his wife for any other cause than fornication, with causing her to commit fornication; whether the woman thus put away committeth

fornication or no, Matt. 5:32; viz., because in that act of putting her away upon such terms, he doth that which hath a proper and direct tendency to cause her to commit this sin. For it is not necessary to suppose that every woman thus divorced or put away, committeth, or will commit fornication. But whether she doth or no, the sin of him that put her away is one and the same; he, in our Saviour's dialect, caused her to commit fornication. Thus, also, he who eats to the offence of a weak brother, is charged by

the apostle with
“Destroying him with his
meat, for whom Christ
died,” Rom. 14:15, 20, *i. e.*
with doing that which is apt
and proper to occasion his
destruction, whether he be
actually destroyed or no. In
this idiom, likewise, of
speaking, God expressly
saith, that he had purged
Jerusalem, and yet in the
same place saith, also, that
Jerusalem,
notwithstanding, was not
purged. “In thy filthiness is
lewdness,” *i. e.* notorious
and desperate obstinacy,
“because I *have purged*
thee, and thou wast not

purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee,” Ezek. 24:13. God is said to have purged Jerusalem, because he vouchsafed proper and sufficient means unto her for her purging, as the ministry of his word and Spirit, frequent admonitions, exhortations, expostulations, promises, threatenings, &c., by his prophets, however Jerusalem by her rebellious obstinacy, hindered and obstructed the thorough and kindly working of these

In this sense, likewise, he is said to be “The propitiation for the sins of the whole world,” not because the sins of the whole world are actually, completely, or with successfulness in the event propitiated or atoned by him, but because that sacrifice of himself, which he hath offered in order to a propitiating or atoning the sins of the whole world, is so pregnant and full of a propitiatory efficacy and virtue, and withal is so propounded and held forth by God unto the whole world, that if any man’s sin remains actually

nor in the event established, confirmed, or kept from evil; and this without any prejudice or disparagement in the least, either unto the grace or goodness of God, or to his power, or effectualness of working in this behalf.

The next Scripture which we shall undertake to right, against those who have done it the injury of fathering the common doctrine of perseverance upon it, is this: “They went out from us, but they were, not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with

that they never were true believers. This certainly can never be proved, because there is another sense, and this every whit as proper to the words, and more commodious for the context and scope of the place, which may be given of them, as we shall see anon. 2. That this expression, "They were of us," signifies that they were true believers: of the uncertainty of this supposition, we shall give the like account. 3. That these words, "They went out from us," signify their final desertion or

abdication of the apostles' communion, or their total and final renunciation of Christ, his church, and gospel. This supposition hath no bottom at all, or colour for it. 4. That this clause, "They would no doubt have continued with us," signifieth they would have continued in the same faith wherein we persevere and continue. Nor is there any competent reason to enforce this sense of these words, because neither doth the grammatical tenor of them require it, and much less the scope of the passage, (of which in due

time.) 5. The said inference supposeth that John certainly knew that all those who for the present remained in his communion were true believers. For if they were not true believers, they that were gone out from them, in the sense contended for, might be said to be of them, *i. e.* persons in the same condition with them. But how improbable this is, (I mean, that John should infallibly know that all those who as yet continued with them were true believers,) I refer to consideration. 6. The

commands no such thing, but upon very heinous and highly unchristian misdemeanors, is of every whit as sad an importance, as a voluntary desertion of the church's communion can be, especially for a season. But,

2. Suppose these two suppositions he granted to the inference makers, 1. That this phrase, "To go out from us," signifies voluntarily to forsake the society or communion of Christians; and 2. That this expression, "To be of us," signifies true and inward communion with those

from whom they went out, yet will not these contributions suffice for the firm building of the said inference. The reason is, because the apostle expressly saith, that “they would have continued *with us*,” not that they would have continued such as they were, in respect of the truth or essence of their faith. And if the apostle’s scope in this place were to prove or affirm, that they who are once true Christians or believers, always continue such, then when he saith, “They would have continued with us,” he

must of necessity mean, either that they would have continued faithful, as we continue faithful; or else, that they would have continued always in our society, or in the profession of Christianity. But that neither of these senses are of any tolerable consistency, is evident by the light of this consideration, viz. that the apostle then must have known that the persons he speaks of, and who went out from them, neither were, nor ever had been, true Christians or believers, when they thus went from

professed the same faith and doctrine with them. By reason hereof some Christians, not so considerate or judicious as others, might possibly think or conceive, that surely all things were not well with the apostles, and those Christian societies with which they consorted; there was something not as it ought to have "been, either in doctrine or manners, or both, which ministered an occasion unto these men to break communion with them, and to leave them. To this the apostle answers, partly by

anti-christian teachers had for a time held communion with them; and, 2. That hereby they had the greater opportunity of doing harm in the world by their false doctrine. But, 2. He answers further, by way of exception, “ But they were not of us,” *i. e.* whilst yet they conversed with us, they were not men of the same spirit or principles with us; we walked in the profession of the gospel with single and upright hearts, not aiming at any secular greatness, or worldly accommodations in one kind or other: these

teachers “were not of them,” in the sense declared, viz. “that they did not continue with them,” *i. e.* they quitted their former intimacy and converse with the apostles, refused to steer the same course, to walk by the same principles any longer with them, which, saith he, questionless they would not have done had they been as sincerely affected towards Jesus Christ and the gospel as we. In which assertion John plainly vindicateth himself, and the Christian churches of his communion, from giving

any just occasion of offence unto those men, whereby they should be any ways induced to forsake them ; and resolves their unworthy departure in this kind unto their own carnal and corrupt hearts, which-lusted after such fleshly accommodations and contentments, that were not to be obtained or enjoyed in a sincere profession of the gospel with the apostles, and those who were perfect in heart with them.

It follows, GREEK, *i.e.*, “but that they might be made manifest that they

Christians with him here spoken of, though it argues and imports a worldly and dangerous distemper in their hearts and spirits, yet doth it not necessarily or demonstratively imply a nullity of their faith.

Another text of Scripture, from whence the doctrine of perseverance claims countenance and credit, is that which speaketh thus: “Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God,” 1 John 3:9. From hence such an argument as this is levied

in defence of the said doctrine: “He that sinneth not, neither can sin, cannot fall away from his faith: Whosoever is born of God, sinneth not, neither can sin. Therefore whosoever is born of God, cannot fall away from his faith.”

To this I answer by distinguishing those terms, sinneth not, neither can sin, made use of in both propositions. First, by sinneth not, may he meant, committeth no act of sin, sinneth not at all. In this sense of the phrase the minor is absolutely untrue. For he that is born of God

certainly sinneth in a sense, i. e. committeth acts, yea, many acts of sin. “In many things,” saith James, “we offend all,” Jam. 3:2; meaning, even the holiest and most regenerate of all. Secondly, by sinneth not, may be meant, say some, doth not perpetrate, or commit sin with delight. But this sense I am confident cannot be justified, either from the Scripture, nor yet upon any competent ground of reason. Not to sin, doth nowhere in Scripture signify not to sin with delight. I acknowledge, that words

the words under debate, sinneth not, or doth not commit sin, are emphatical in the Scripture before us. But that the emphasis lieth in any such modification, which should give them this sense, sinneth not with delight, hath no good accord with reason or with, truth. For there are many bom of God who do commit sin with delight; yea, the delight or pleasure which they take in many sins committed by them, is the chief if not the only reason why they commit them. Yea, it is a question, whether any man commits

any sin whatsoever without delight in one kind or other.

Thirdly, By “sinneth not” is meant, say others, sinneth not deliberately, or without inward reluctance in the act of sinning. But neither hath this sense any better bottom than conjecture, and this obnoxious enough to him that will chew and not swallow; for, 1. What necessity is there that, when John saith, “He that is born of God doth not commit sin,” he should mean committeth it not with deliberation, or

premeditation, or without reluctance? Why may not his meaning as well be “doth not commit sin” unto death, or customarily, *as* other men do, or the like?

2. Certain it is, that “he that is bom of God” doth, at least sometimes, “commit sin” with deliberation, yea, and, in the apostle’s expression, “makes provision for the flesh,” Rom. 13:14; i. e. plots and projects means and opportunities for the committing of it, and digests it, as it were, into method beforehand, that he may commit it the more

artificially, as well as wicked men: witness David in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah, 2 Sam. 11.: witness the two patriarchs, Simeon and Levi, in the matter of the Shechemites, Gen. 34; besides examples in this kind which every day almost brings forth. 3. Neither is it true that every one that is born of God sinneth always, when he doth sin, with inward reluctancy. Doubtless, David was not divided in himself, suffered no inward conflict about the committing of those sins lately intimated,

apostle saith that “he that is bom of God doth not commit sin,” some understand it of committing sin unto death, or with final impenitency. This exposition, indeed, if it could be made to stand upright, would bear the weight of the controversy depending alone; but it argues much weakness for a man, in an exposition of Scripture, to determine for his own sense in a controversy or question, without giving a very substantial reason of such his exposition. Now, I can meet with no reason at all

“whosoever is born of God sinneth not nor doth the apostle John affirm it, as hath been clearly shown, in any such sense.

If, by “sinneth not,” the argument meaneth, walketh not ordinarily or customarily in any known way or course of sin,—maketh not, as it were, a trade or occupation of sinning, (which we have formerly proved to be the sense of the phrase GREEK, in the Scriptures, and more particularly in the writings of this apostle, (Chap, 9.,) the said minor proposition is granted as to

duly to mind and consider my words. This signification of the word “cannot,” is most frequent in Scripture. See further upon this account, Gen. 37:4; Rev. 2:2; Matt, 20:22; Mark 9:39; Luke 11:7, 14, 20, See. Thirdly, the word “cannot” sometimes notes only the difficulty of a thing to be performed. In this sense our Saviour, approving that saying of his disciples, “It is good not to marry,” saith thus, “All men *cannot* receive this saying,” &c., Matt. 19:11 ; meaning that it was very difficult for some men to

notwithstanding, they were in a capacity of standing before him another time, as, viz. when they should be healed of their boils. Thus it is said, “ That the children of Israel *could not* stand before their enemies,” Judg. 7:12, viz. whilst Achan’s sin was unpunished amongst them ; yet were they remotely capable not only of standing before their enemies, but of vanquishing, yea, and making their enemies fly before them. Fifthly, and lastly, The phrase “cannot,” frequently importeth an

multiply instances of this signification.

Now if the clause, “cannot sin,” in the argument propounded, be understood according to any of the four first significations mentioned of the word cannot, both the propositions are false; if according to the fifth and last, the major is true, hut the minor false. The major proposition was this: “He that sinneth not, *neither can sin*, cannot fall away from his faith.” 1. If by the denial of a power to sin in this proposition, which that clause, “neither can sin,”

third signification of the word cannot, neither will this sense give any colour of truth to the said proposition. For he that can hardly sin, or not sin without difficulty, may yet possibly sin; and consequently, such an inability to sin notwithstanding, fall away from his faith. 4. If by “cannot sin,” the argument imports only a present incapacity of sinning in the person, not excluding a remote capacity in him hereunto, and such is, may in time, by means suitable, be reduced into act, evident

argument now under
canvass, are false.

If the said argument
understands the phrase,
“cannot sin, according to
the fifth and last import
mentioned of the word
cannot, wherein it sounds
an utter and absolute
incapacity or impossibility,
though in this sense the
major proposition be
granted, viz. that he that
doth not sin, nor can sin,
cannot fall away from his
faith, yet the minor is tardy,
which saith, as we lately
heard, “whosoever is born
of God sinneth not, neither
can sin.” For he that is born

tenor of the whole verse is this, “Whosoever is horn of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” Here are two propositions or assertions laid down, and a reason given of either of them respectively. The former proposition is this “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.” The reason hereof is, “for his seed remaineth in him.” The latter proposition this, “Whosoever is born of God cannot sin.” The reason hereof is, “because he is born of God.” The sense

and difference of the two propositions, according to what we have argued about the place hitherto, and what we judge is this, GREEK, &c. every one that hath been bom of God sinneth not, *i. e.* whosoever hath by the word and Spirit of God been made partaker of the divine nature, so as to resemble God in the frame and constitution of his heart and soul, doth not under such a frame or change of heart as this make a trade or practice of sinning, or walk in any course of inordinateness in the world; yea, saith he, in

the latter proposition, every such person doth not only or simply refrain sinning in such a sense, but he cannot sin, *i. e.* he hath a strong and potent disposition in him which carrieth him another way; or he hath a strong antipathy or averseness of heart and soul against all sin, especially against all such kind of sinning. Now the reason, saith the apostle, why such a person committeth not sin, in the sense explained, is because his seed, the seed of God, by or of which he was born of him, GREEK, remaineth

in him, *i. e.* according to the frequent signification of the word GREEK, to abide or remain, in the writings of this apostle, is or hath an actual and present being or residence in him. And that in this place it doth not signify any perpetual remaining or abiding, no nor any abiding with relation to the future is evident; because the abiding of the seed here spoken of, is given as the reason why he that is born of God doth not commit sin, *i. e.* doth not at present walk in any course of known sin. Now nothing in

effect, yet may it well be a ground or reason of the continuance of a present effect.

Now that the word GREEK, to remain or abide, frequently signifieth, especially in the writings of this apostle, only a present residence or being:, whether of a person or thing, without any reference unto or implication of a future, appears by many instances. “But ye know him,” saith our Saviour to his disciples, speaking of the Spirit, GREEK, *i. e.* “because he remaineth (or abideth)

with you, and shall be in you.” Here the latter clause, “and shall be in you,” will be found a mere tautology, if the other phrase “abiding with them” imports a perpetual residence or in-being. In the same chapter, verse 25, where the original hath it, GREEK, *i. e.* remaining or abiding with you; our English translation renders it, “being yet *present* with you.” So where the apostle saith, “That he that loveth not his brother GREEK, abideth in death, 1 John 3:14; the meaning is, that such a man is in an estate

GREEK, which properly signifieth to remain, for the verb substantive to be.

Besides, that in the place in hand, it must needs signify only a present abode or being, not a future or perpetual, is evident from hence, because such a signification of it would render a sense altogether inconsistent with the plain scope of the apostle in the context, which is to exhort Christians unto righteousness and love of the brethren. Now, it is contrary to all reason, yea, to common sense itself, to signify unto those whom we

nature of seed to be full of spirits, and thereby exceedingly vigorous and operative. Secondly, the effect here ascribed to it, the keeping or preserving of the man in whom it remains from sinning, which requires a principle of very great strength and power to effect, implieth the same. Now, such a principle, genius, or quality in a man as the Holy Ghost calls the divine nature, may well be conceived to be very spiritfuf, and vigorously operative, according to the kind and tendency of it, in which respect it is

frequently termed spirit; and consequently, to be sufficiently active and powerful to preserve its subject from sinning. Yea, our apostle, in assigning the reason of his latter assertion in this place, which is, that “he that is born of God cannot sin,” the reason whereof he allegeth to be this, “because he is born of God,” supposeth the seed here spoken of, whatsoever is meant by it, to be so actuous and powerful, that it doth not only actually and *de facto* preserve him in whom it remains from

the reason why a lion hath courage, strength, and other like leonine properties, is because he came of a lion, a creature naturally endued with the same properties. But whatsoever is here meant by the seed of God, whether the word of God or the divine nature, so notioned as hath been described, evident it is, by what hath been argued, that no inseparableness of it from the present subject, nor consequently any impossibility of falling away from faith, can be inferred from any thing

spoken of it, as attributed to it in this place.

There is only one objection more, as far as I am able to apprehend, that lieth with any seemingness of strength against the premises. The tenor hereof is this : If the seed of God, whatever it be, remaining in a man regenerate, worketh in him the greatest and strongest antipathy against, or alienation and abhorrency of mind and affection from sin, that can lightly be imagined, which hath been granted all along in the traverse of the Scripture in hand, how is it

possible that such a man should fall away, especially totally and finally, from his faith ? It is no ways reasonable to suppose, that it is possible for a man so to fall away from his faith without sinning, no, nor yet without sinning very grievously; nor is it much more reasonable, if not as unreasonable altogether, to suppose that a man may sin, and that grievously, who hath the greatest and strongest antipathy against sin, the deepest alienation and abhorrency of mind and will from sin, that lightly can be conceived;

consequently, that antipathy or hatred against sin, which is in him, how perfect soever it be, may lose ground also, and abate of its perfection. Therefore,

2. When we suppose or grant a strong antipathy against sin in those that are born of God, we do not suppose withal, either this antipathy to be unimpairable, or any such principle, which cannot decline in the strength and power of it; or that it can be impaired or decline without sin in him who suffers an impairment of it to be made in him. When we

suppose the greatest antipathy against sin in a man that flesh and blood is lightly capable of, we do not hereby suppose him without the reach of temptation, or a man not subject to incogitancies, forgetfulness, and other human frailties. We may very well, and ought to, suppose Solomon to have been the wisest of men, and yet suppose him withal, even in the height and excellency of his wisdom, to have been a man capable, or under a possibility, of doing weakly or foolishly. *Nemo omnibus horis sapit.*

So again, “ Know ye not that to whomsoever ye give yourselves as servants to obey, his *servants* ye are whom ye obey, whether it be,” &c., Rom. 6:16. So also, “*Can* the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil,” Jer. 13:23. Of like consideration is that also of our Saviour, “ A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit: neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit,” Matt. 7:18; to omit many others. But, 4, and lastly, When the Scripture supposeth or

principle in themselves to what degree they desire, yea, and in time wholly enervate, dissipate, and expel them: therefore it is 'no dura suppo sitio', no hard supposition, to suppose that a person invested with the strongest antipathy against sin whereof he is capable, especially in the state and condition of morality, may, notwithstanding, even in sensu composito, i. e. this antipathy standing, either do that which is sinful, but especially omit or neglect the doing of that which is his duty, yea, and of great

concernment likewise unto him to do.

Thus we have at last fully and clearly, we suppose, acquitted that Scripture, 1 John 3:9, more vehemently suspected and charged than all his fellows with confederacy against that doctrine which affirms a possibility of a total and final defection in the saints. Another Scripture hath the same imputation cast upon it for speaking only thus: “My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to take them out of my Father’s hand,” John 10:29.

against all adverse power whatsoever, is frequently asserted in Scripture, but no where for the compelling or necessitating of them to persevere or continue such. Nor is there the least intimation of any such thing in the text before us. And yet here I shall further add in reference unto it,

That by the tenor and carriage of the context it appears, 1, That that security for which our Saviour engageth the greatness of his Father's power unto his sheep, is promised or ascertained

following, ver. 28, “ And I give unto them eternal life.” This gift of his pre-supposeth the final perseverance of those to whom it is given. It follows, “and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.” In these words he seems further to explain how and in what sense he calls that “life eternal” which he promiseth to confer upon them, as, viz. that by the eternalness of it, he doth not only mean such a constitution or condition of it which secureth it from perishing or dissolving, in

affectionate and tender parents are wont to forget and lay aside the care and thoughts of their dearest children, as, viz. when he knew and was very sensible of a most hideous and grievous storm and tempest of death hanging over his head, and even now ready to fall upon him. At such a time as this he expressed his love to them, and care over them, as appeareth partly by that condescentious action of his in washing their feet, which immediately followeth in this chapter; partly by that large and

upon the place; and so incessantly Calvin likewise, not to mention any more, plainly enough intimates the same sense. “Nor is it doubtful,” saith he upon the place, “but that even now he bears the same affection which he retained in the very instant of death.” So that in this passage of Scripture there is neither colour nor shadow of any thing for the final perseverance of the saints, but only for the perseverance of Christ’s love towards them whilst they persevere, which indeed may be

angels the greatest happiness they were capable of, and in the next hour, perhaps sooner, their sin intervening, he cast them out of his sight into the greatest misery, this argued no change, or shadow of change or turning in God. Therefore,

2. That unchangeableness which the Scriptures, or God himself in the Scriptures asserts unto himself, is to be considered only in respect of his essence, attributes, and decrees, and not in respect of any constancy, or sameness of tenor in his

dispensations towards the same creatures, whether they be changed or no. First, God is unchangeable in his essence or simple being: in respect of this nothing can be added to him, nothing can be taken from him, nothing can be altered or made otherwise, with him, in him, or about him, than now it is or was from eternity. This unchangeableness in him the prophet David contemplated, in this his address to him: “Of old thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the

these attributes. As a man may be as strong, when he acts little or nothing with his strength, as when in any action he exerts or puts forth the uttermost of it: and so may be of as loving and sweet a disposition, when, according to the exigency of his calling and conscience, he most severely punisheth the same persons, for their misdemeanors, whom he sometimes honoured and loved, whilst he judged them virtuous, as he was whilst he yet honoured and loved them. When a judge, who is of a sweet nature

and wicked men, as to reward the former with eternal glory, the latter with eternal shame and misery, and that he hath at any time expressed his love and goodness in this kind, evident it is, that in case he should at any time not punish persevering apostates, which are the wickedest of men, with eternal death, it would argue an alteration or change in those attributes of his we speak of. Therefore, to reason thus, if God should love a man to-day, and hate him to-morrow, it would argue

they are two, and these very different. In like manner the angels, in the integrity of their creation, and in the guilt of their transgression, are one and the same object, materially considered, but formally they differ as much as light and darkness ; and to argue, that unless God should always love the same persons, materially considered, whom he once or at any time loved, he should be mutable in his love, necessarily supposeth either that God hated the lapsed angels whilst they were yet holy, and in the

may now be hated of him,
without any the least
change or alteration in him,
or in his affection, only by
means of a change and
alteration in themselves.
The third and last
particular wherein the
unchangeableness of God is
to be considered, are his
decrees. These, truly stated
and understood, are all
absolute and
unchangeable, shall and
will take place and be
fulfilled, against all
contradictions and
oppositions whatsoever.
But of this formerly, Chap.
3. And that

impressed also for the service of the doctrine of absolute personal election, we shall reserve the further consideration of it till our method hath carried us on to that subject, and for the present examine it only in relation to the point in hand; therefore,

Whereas it is argued from this place, that persons once regenerate are infallibly drawn and carried on to glory by a series or chain of divine acts or decrees, uninterruptedly succeeding or taking hold of one another, I answer,

That no such conclusion

discovery of him unto them than unto others whom he hath not so predestinated. By the way, this call doth not necessarily suppose a saving answer given unto it by the called, no whit more than that calling mentioned Matt. 20:16, and Matt. 22:14, only it supposeth a real purpose and intent on God's part, to make it very sufficient to procure such an answer to it from those that are called. The apostle advanceth towards his proposed end, and addeth thus; “ Whom he called, them he also justified *i. e.* according to our late

explication of the word called, he hath purposed or decreed to justify, viz., in case the called obstruct him not in his way, or by their unbelief render not themselves incapable of justification by him. The clause following, the last in the period, is likewise to be understood with a like proviso or clause of exception, as viz., thus; and “whom he hath justified, them hath he also glorified,” *i. e.* hath purposed or decreed to save or glorify them, in case they retain the grace of justification conferred

upon, them unto the end, and do not make shipwreck of that faith upon which it was conferred.

That these decrees or purposed acts of God here specified are to be understood in their successive dependences, with such a condition or proviso, respectively, as those mentioned, and not absolutely, peremptorily, or without condition, appears, 1. By the like phrase or manner of expression frequent in the Scripture elsewhere ; I mean, where such purposes or decrees of God the respective

executions whereof are suspended upon such and such conditions, are notwithstanding simply and positively, and without any mention of condition expressed and asserted. “Wherefore,” saith the man of God sent unto Eli, “ the Lord God of Israel saith, I *said* indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, shall walk before me,” meaning in the office and dignity of the priesthood, “ for ever; but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me: for,” *See.*, 1 Sam. 2:30. “I *said* indeed,” *i.e.* I verily purposed or decreed, or I

promised according to my real purpose or decree. Understand it either of purpose or promise, it comes much to one, a promise always including or presupposing a purpose answerable to it. (See Chap, 11.) When God made the promise, and so declared his purpose accordingly, that Eli and his father's house should walk before him for ever, he expressed no condition as required to the execution or performance of it; yet here it plainly appears that there was a condition understood, viz. the regular

posterity had walked obediently with him; not that his purpose itself, considered as an act or conception of the mind of God, depended upon this or upon any other condition whatsoever, (all God's purposes and decrees, without exception, are in such a respect absolute and independent, as hath been said formerly,) but that the actual establishment of his kingdom according to such a purpose depended hereupon. Thus God's purpose of preserving the lives of all that were with Paul in the ship, is

he truly believeth or no ;
and he that is justified,
must needs be glorified,
whether he persevereth or
no.

If it be objected and said,
Yea, but he that is called, in
the sense here meant, must
needs believe, and
consequently be justified;
and so he that is justified
must needs persevere, and
so be glorified.

I answer, that whether
either the one or the other
of these assertions be so or
no, it must be judged of by
other Scriptures ; certain it
is, by what hath been
argued concerning the

uninterruptibleness of it in what case or cases soever, he should fight against his general and main scope or design in that part of this chapter which lieth from about verse 17 to the end; which clearly is this, to exhort, strengthen, and encourage them to constancy and perseverance in suffering afflictions. For to suggest any such thing unto them as that being called and justified, nothing could possibly interpose to hinder them from being glorified, was to furnish them with a plain motive or

ground on which to neglect his exhortation in that kind. For who will be persuaded to suffer tribulation, or things grievous to be endured, for the obtaining of that which they have sufficient assurance given that they shall obtain, whether they suffer such things or no? Therefore certainly the apostle did not intend here to teach or imply the certainty of perseverance in those which are once justified unto salvation, against all carriages and miscarriages of these persons whatsoever.

3, and lastly, I demonstrate the same thing yet further, by this consideration. If God should justify all without exception whom he calleth, and that against all bars of wickedness and unbelief possible to be laid in his way by those who are called, then might ungodly and unbelieving persons inherit the kingdom of God and of Christ. But the Scripture speaks aloud the impossibility, or, however, the non-futurity hereof. Ergo, The reason of the connexion in the major proposition is evident, it being a known truth that

persons justified are in a condition or present capacity of inheriting the kingdom of God.

If it be objected that the said connexion is tardy in this, that it supposeth that which ought not to be supposed, viz. that persons called by God, in the sense of the word “ calling” here meant, may lay such bars of wickedness or unbelief in the way which shall hinder God from justifying them; I answer, Judas, Demas, Simon Magus, and others were called, and yet they laid such bars as we speak of in the way, and by which

imports an infallible and universal exertion or execution of the latter, wheresoever the former hath taken place. That Judas was called with such a calling as this, is Chrysostom's collection from Matt. 19:28, from whom Peter Martyr knows not well how to dissent in the point ; and how probable, at least, it is that the other two mentioned, Simon Magus, and especially Demas, were partakers of the like calling with him, may be considered in due time. But that they all three, with

wickedness and unbelief, barred up the way against their final justification is, I suppose, every man's hypothesis and grant, or conjecture, at least.

But some, it may be, will yet further object against the interpretation given, and plead, 1. That the connexion between these two links of this chain, predestination to a conformity with Christ, and calling, is simply and absolutely indissolvable, so that, for example, whosoever is thus predestinated by God, never fails of being called

pass from under that decree of predestination, and fall under another decree of God opposite thereunto, and so never come to be called. But,

2. To the latter of the said pleas, I answer, by denying the unlikelihood therein asserted. For in one and the same concatenation of Divine acts, the aspect and manner or kind of dependence between act and act, may vary according to their different natures, or the different tenor of God's decrees concerning them. As for example. God may decree to

case he had not been so given, is sufficiently evident without proof. So that evident it is, that this act of God hath only an accidental or contingent dependence upon, or coherence with, the former; whereas this former hath an essential and necessary confluxion with the first, as hath been shown. There is the same consideration of the relation between the third and fourth, or last of these acts. For God, upon his decree to grant unto his creature man a sufficiency of means and opportunity to promote, in his way, viz.

another of these acts follow the next predecessor to it in the series, but contingently, and consequently admit of many suspensions and interruptions. Therefore there is nothing in the last objection against that exposition of the Scripture in hand which hath been asserted, both the feet upon which it stands being weak and lame.

There is yet another objection, colourable, I suppose, in some men's eyes, against the said interpretation. The substance of it this: If the links of that chain of Divine

grant and teach that the saints themselves cannot have any peace or comfort in their faith, or assurance of salvation, whilst they walk profanely, loosely, or unfaithfully with God. So that these men themselves do suspend the peace and comfort, and, much more, the joy and triumph, of the faith of the saints upon their Christian behaviour, and regular walkings with God. Therefore, judging the exposition given, upon such an account as this, they condemn themselves, and their own doctrines.

2. The assurance of the

continuance of God's love to them, and of his care over them, whilst they in any measure walk worthy of it, is a regular and due foundation unto the saints of every whit as great a confidence, exultation, and triumph, as the apostle, in the words mentioned, entitles them unto. Yea,

3. The very particular and express ground upon which he buildeth up himself and the saints with him, in such a triumphant confidence as we heard, is this: the sense or assurance of God's love towards them, (meaning, whilst they walk with him

forsake their own mercies and destroy themselves. Himself owned and built upon this consideration, when he spake thus by the mouth of one of his greatest prophets: “Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength,” Isa. 49:5. In the former verse he speaks thus in his representer: “Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.” And immediately

afford unto the sons and daughters of men means and opportunities in abundance, whereby to repent and believe, and consequently to be saved. So that whensoever Christ is faithfully and effectually preached unto men, in order to their salvation, God obtains his end and intent concerning their salvation, whether they come to be saved or no, *i. e.* whether they repent and believe, or remain impenitent in unbelief.

2. For the phrase, or manner of expression, “that he might be the

expected from such just severity. So again in the same chapter, speaking of the king whom they should set over them, and the book of the law, “And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them,” Deut. 17:19. These words, “that he may learn,” &c., do not import the event, or effect that would certainly follow upon the duty or course prescribed, but either what God’s intentions were in

are called may not be justified, or they that are justified not be glorified, how can the apostle's proof stand, that "all things work together for good to those who love God," which, as yourself acknowledged, is the doctrine or conclusion, the demonstration of the truth whereof the apostle intends by the producing of this golden chain of Divine acts, taking hold, in a clear subordination, one upon another ? Can "all things " be said to "work together for good " to him who never comes to be glorified, but to be everlastingly

condemned? To this I answer,

That this doctrine or saying of the apostle, “All things work together for good unto those who love God,” is to be understood with the like explication, or grain of spiritual salt, wherewith these two, and a thousand more sentences in the Scriptures are to be seasoned; “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned,” Mark 16:16. The meaning of this latter saying, to proceed a notioribus ad magis ignota,

what subject or person
soever it resides, and whilst
it there resides, doth, by
virtue of the gracious
decree or will of God in that
behalf, invest him with this
privilege, viz. to have all
occurrences of things
relating to him, even
afflictions and persecutions
themselves, benefactors
unto him. To make this
good, he shows what God
hath fully purposed or
decreed to do for such men,
or, which is the same, what
he hath predestinated such
men unto, as, viz. to a
conformity with or to the
image of his own Son, the

actual conformity with Christ in his glory, and glorifieth them accordingly. Why the purpose or intended actings of God are expressed in Scripture rather in the preterperfect tense than either in the present or future, is accounted elsewhere in this Discourse. But in all these gradations mentioned of the counsel of God concerning the bringing of those that love him unto a conformity with Christ in his glory, the same subject, formally considered, *i. e.* those that love him as such, is to be understood ; so that

elect amongst them, in every estate and condition.

3. The promise of perseverance in grace, according to the same principles, includes in it, or supposeth such an interposure of God by his Spirit and grace, which shall and will, and must needs, infallibly produce the effect of perseverance in all those to whom it is made, *i. e.* true believers; whereas, evident it is from the prophet Ezekiel, that this promise notwithstanding, the Jews might rebel against and apostatise from God. The

whole passage in Ezekiel is this: “Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God, although I have cast them fax off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord God, I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the

plainly imply their final perseverance ? I answer;

1. That these words, “that they shall not depart from me,” savour too much of the translation; the original would rather have them thus, “that they *may* not depart from me,” as the translators also themselves render words of the same character in the former verse. “And I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever.” And thus both Arias Montanus, and Junius and Tremellius also render them.

2. The words thus read do

not necessarily import the actual event or taking place, of the effect intended by God in the promise, and his performance thereof, but only his intention itself in both these, together with the sufficiency and aptness of what he promiseth, for the producing of such an effect in them. As when our Saviour expressed himself thus unto the Jews, “ But these things I say, that ye might be saved,” John 5:34; he did not suppose that they either would or should be infallibly saved, by means of what he spake, for a few verses after, speaking

still to the same persons, he saith, “And ye will not come to me that ye might have life;” but he declared, that the real desire and intent of his heart and soul, in speaking to them as he did, was, that they might be saved; and withal, that the words which he spake to them were such as by the due minding and hearkening whereunto they might and should have been saved. There is the same consideration of what God said unto Adam: “Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not

concluded from sundry passages in this promissory contexture of Scripture than the certainty of their perseverance in grace from those mentioned. For here God promiseth that he will do thus and thus by them, "for the good of them and of their children after them," verse 39. And again, that he "will make an everlasting covenant with them, that he will not turn away from them to do them good; that he will rejoice over them to do them good, and will plant them in that their land assuredly, with his whole heart and with

his whole soul,” verses 40, 41. And yet we know, that all these promises and engagements on God’s part notwithstanding, God since the making of them, hath turned away from them, and that in greater displeasure than ever before; yea, and that, as the apostle saith, “his wrath is come upon them to the uttermost,” 1 Thess. 2:16; and they are accordingly at this day the most contemptible and miserable nation under heaven. This plainly sheweth that all these promises were conditional,

or all comprised in it; and when one party refuseth to make good the terms imposed thereby upon him, to disoblige and free the other. Therefore,

6, and lastly, The true and clear intent and meaning of the spiritual promises made unto the people of the Jews, now in captivity, in the Scripture in hand, and particularly of the expressions last objected, is this: “I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever; and will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not (or may not) depart

fear and serve me for ever.
To secure this
interpretation,

1. That is to be
remembered which hath
been offered to
consideration already, viz.,
That it is the frequent and
familiar dialect of
Scripture, to ascribe the
doing of things, or the
effects themselves, unto
those, whether God or men,
who either minister
occasion, or afford proper
or likely means or
endeavours for the doing of
them, whether ever they be
actually effected or no. A
pleasant number of

certainly of knowledge, or determination in himself, that any such heart, or way, should actually, and with effect, be given unto them, which would infallibly produce such an effect in them, as is here specified; but because he was purposed so to entreat them, and to afford such excellent administrations of his grace and Spirit unto them, which should be very pregnant, proper, and efficacious, to create such an heart in them, and to put them into such a way, that they should never have declined from his worship

and service, whilst the sun and moon endure. This answer, I acknowledge, is of much affinity with the former. Therefore,

3, and lastly, that no such sense was intended by God in the words or promises yet under consideration, which imports any certainty of a final perseverance in grace, in those to whom they are spoken and made, fully appears from all those prophetical passages and predictions in the Old Testament, which are many in number, and very plain and pregnant in import,

of the commonly-taught doctrine of perseverance. Two texts I call to mind at present which are sometimes called in to the assistance of the doctrine of perseverance hitherto opposed, and have not received, answer in this chapter. The former is Matt. 7:18; the latter, Rom. xi. 29. But for this latter, it hath been sufficiently handled upon another account, Chap. 8 page 224. As to the former, we shall, I conceive, have occasion to speak in the second part of this discourse. We now proceed to the examination

of such arguments and grounds otherwise, upon which the said doctrine, in some men's eyes, stands impregnable.

CHAPTER 11.

A further continuation of the former digression, wherein the arguments and grounds commonly alleged in defence of the received doctrine of Perseverance, are detected of insufficiency, proved, and declared null.

WE shall begin with that which is the first-born of the strength of our adversaries in this kind. “That,” say they, “which God hath promised in his word is certain, and shall take place, against all opposition and contradiction whatsoever. But God hath promised in his word that all true believers shall both totally and finally persevere; therefore all such shall certainly so persevere, against whatsoever may or shall at any time oppose their persevering.” To this I answer,

hinder it; but with this proviso or condition, that they in the ship should hearken unto him, and follow his advice, in order to their preservation ; as is evident from those words of Paul himself, to whom this promise was made, “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be safe,” Acts 27:31 ; so that had the centurion and rest in the ship suffered the mariners to have left the ship, whilst it was yet at sea, there had been no failing in promise with God though they had all been drowned. In like manner, though Christ

to be performed unto them, than as abiding, and whilst they shall abide, in the same qualifications. As for example; what promises soever God makes unto believers, with respect had to their faith or as they are believers, are not to be looked upon as performable, or obliging the Maker of them unto them, in case they shall relapse into their former unbelief: but of this we spake plentifully in our last chapter and elsewhere. The major proposition thus explained and understood, we admit, whatsoever God

promiseth is certain, &c., viz. according to the true intent and meaning of the promise.

The minor, also, relieved with an orthodox and sober explication, as likewise the conclusion itself and whole argument, is blameless, and thinketh no evil against the doctrine now under vindication; for in this sense it is most true that God hath promised that all true believers shall persevere; *i. e.* that all true believers, formally considered, *i. e.* as such, and abiding such, shall persevere, viz. in his grace

there are several others, besides those there discharged, chosen by men of that judgment to serve in the same warfare; but they are all of the same mind with their fellows, who, as we have heard, detract that service. Most of these are promises anciently made unto the Jewish nation in the Old Testament, all, or most of them, of like import with that Jer. 32:39, &c. largely opened towards the end of the former chapter, and are to be measured with the same line of interpretation. Nor can it ever be so much as

upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever," Isa.59:21. And again ; " And I will betroth thee unto me for ever, yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercy: I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness," &c. Hos. 2:19, 20.

For the first of these

imperative mood, “Let not my words depart,” and granteth withal, that the future tense will bear an imperative construction. According to this sense, the meaning of those words, “This is my covenant with them,” is this, That covenant of perpetual grace and mercy which I make with them, requireth this of them, in order to the performance of it on my part, that they quench not my Spirit which I shall put into them, nor forsake my word that I shall teach them. Or,

2. If we look upon the

keep covenant with him, and do what he requires of them. But,

4. Be it granted, that the words in debate are promissive, and that whether with condition, or without condition, yet nothing can be more clear than this, that they are or were directed and spoken, not (as was said concerning the former passage) to saints or true believers only, but to the whole posterity of Jacob, or nation of the Jews. The apostle Paul questionless understood them thus directed and meant, as

as sembles a promise of final perseverance unto either. Evident it is, that this promise exhibiteth and holdeth forth some new grace or favour, like unto which God had not vouchsafed any formerly, either unto the persons to whom the said promise is now made, or to any other. The very character and tenor of the promise importeth this clearly. Let it be compared either with any former promise in the Scripture, one or more, or with any dispensation of God towards any person or people, and there will be

found no comportment between them. Nor for the grace or favour of final perseverance, it is nothing, at least in the opinion of our adversaries, but what is common to all true believers, and what God hath conferred upon one and other of this generation of men from the beginning of the world.

6, and lastly, It is very improper, and doth not look like one of the wise dispensations of God, to make a serious and solemn promise unto men of that, which they might and ought to expect of course,

will) “take place, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved.” So that he placeth the substance of the promise in this, that the nation of the Jews shall never, from the days of Christ in the flesh, be wholly, altogether, or in all the members of it, destitute of the Spirit and word of Christ. This exposition supposeth nothing in the promise for the business of final perseverance. Notwithstanding I conceive that God here rather promiseth this, viz. that he will advance the

dispensations of his grace and goodness towards and amongst this people, to such an excellency and height, that, if they prove not extremely unworthy and neglective above measure of their own happiness, they shall have of the Spirit and word of God abundantly amongst them, and consequently abundance of peace and happiness for ever. The promise thus understood began to operate and work, and was performed in part in and upon their deliverance from that seventy years' captivity;

the chapter. Therefore, 4, and lastly, The true intent and purpose of this place and promise, “And I will betroth thee,” &c., is as if he should have said, When I shall by my word and Spirit, and other gracious administrations, wherein I shall appear to this people, so far prevail with them and overcome them, as to cause them to cast away their idols, and turn with their whole heart unto me, I will express myself so, with so much love and affection unto them, that they shall not lightly, neither they, nor their

producing such an effect. And thus Tarnovius, a late and learned expositor of the reformed religion, understands it, “I will betroth thee unto me, whom,” saith he, “thou formerly despisedst and shamefully forsookest, and *as much as in me lieth*, whose gifts are without repentance, Rom. 11:29, this betrothing shall stand firm for ever, nor shall this spiritual conjunction between us ever be dissolved as formerly,” &c. Those words, “quod ad me,” *i. e.* as far as in me lieth, or as far as

concerneth me, plainly show that this author looked upon the promise of betrothing, especially as to the perpetuity of it, but as conditional; and such, which through the unfaithfulness and unworthiness of the party to be betrothed, might possibly never bring forth such a betrothment. We have once and again, if not a third time also, given notice formerly, that the using of means, endeavours, or attempts to bring things to pass, are very commonly in Scripture expressed by the effects

the apostle said to the Corinthians, that they were in his heart to die and live together with them, (2 Cor. 7:3,) his meaning was not that they were so in his heart to die, &c.,—that what manner of persons soever they should prove afterwards, though they should apostatise to idolatry, blasphemy, heathenism, or the like, he could notwithstanding be well content to live and die with them; but thus, they were in his heart, &c., *i. e.* they were for the present such persons whom he singularly affected, and

with whom he could he well content to hold communion both in death and life. We have given notice formerly more than once, Chap, 10., and at the beginning of this chapter, that the promises of God made unto men with respect to such and such special qualifications, are to be understood with such an explication or caution wherewith his threatenings against such and such particular sins are to be interpreted; as for example, when God threatened that “unrighteous persons shall not inherit the kingdom of

grace which is in them by drinking the water that Christ hath given them, are yet subject to both kinds of thirst, as well that which is corporal or natural, as that which is spiritual; yea, that spiritual thirst unto which they axe now subject, though it argues a deficiency of what they would further have or desire to be, and in that respect is troublesome, yet is it argumentative of the goodness or blessedness of their condition: “ Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled,”

accident by the way, come to be a man in his full stature and strength. But as this frame or tendency of the conception we speak of doth no ways prove that therefore it must of necessity, or what will or can befall it, come in time to be a perfect man; so neither is it necessary that that life in the saints, which is seminally, inchoately, and conception-wise eternal, should, against all possible occurrences of things adverse to it, come to be actually, properly, and completely eternal. The result of this discourse

amounts clearly to this, that our Saviour, in the words in hand, doth not oppose the life which comes by drinking his water to the life of nature in respect of the present and imperfect condition of it in this world, but in respect of the future and complete growth and condition of it in the world to come. Therefore,

2, When he saith that the water which he shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up, &c., his meaning is not as if either the doctrine or spirit which he gives unto men,

channel, or dried up by the violent and scorching heat of the sun. Therefore neither is there any promise in this Scripture, of such a perseverance of the saints in faith, as is commonly notioned amongst us, and hath been opposed hitherto.

Another place wherein the said minor proposition, in the sense intended by the assertors, is pretended to be found, consists of these words: “ And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever,”

John 14:16. But,

1. Evident it is that our Saviour doth not in this place oppose the abiding or remaining of the Holy Ghost, to his own discession or departure from the hearts or souls of men, into which he is entered or come, but to his departure out of the world by death, which was now at hand. Therefore,

2. By the abiding of the Comforter, or Holy Ghost, with them for ever, he doth not mean his perpetual or uninterrupted residence or abode in their hearts or souls, or in the heart or soul

of any other particular man determinately, but his constant abiding in the world, in and with the gospel, and the children thereof, until the consummation and end of it. In respect of which permanency of his Spirit, with them and their spiritual successors or posterity, he saith of himself elsewhere, “And, lo, I am with you always, to the end of the world,” Matt, 28:20. And to put our Saviour’s meaning in the words in hand, into words of more plainness, it was as if he should have said to his

which I came: for he shall be sent, not to be taken out of the world by death, as I must be, but to make his residence with and amongst you, my friends and faithful ones, for ever. This to be our Saviour's express drift and scope, in the words, appears by the carriage of the greatest part of the chapter. Now from such an abiding of the Holy Ghost with them as this, cannot be inferred his perpetual abiding with any one person or believer, determinately, much less with every one.

3. This promise concerning

the abiding of this other Comforter for ever, must be conceived to be made, either to the apostles, personally considered, or else to the whole body of the church, of which they were principal members. If the first of these be admitted, then it will not follow, that because the apostles had the perpetual residency of the Spirit with them and in them; therefore every particular believer hath the like, no more, than it will follow, that because the apostles were infallible in their judgments and doctrine,

through the teachings of the Spirit in them; therefore every believer is infallible upon the same account also. If the latter be admitted, neither will it follow, that every believer, or every member of the church, must needs have the residence of the Spirit with him for ever. There are privileges appropriate to corporations or bodies politic, which every particular member of these bodies cannot claim. The church may have the residence or presence of the Spirit of God with her for ever; and yet every

that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation,” &c., John. 24; and again, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,” John 3:36; and, “He that eateth me shall live by me,” John 6:57, with many others of like import, enough, and that with advantage, hath been said already, to evince them innocent from all compliance with the common doctrine, heterodoxly surnamed orthodox, of perseverance. These indeed are all promises of eternal life

now done with the first argument of our opponents in the present controversy. Their second is built upon such texts which affirm and teach that God will, according to his promise, so preserve and keep all true believers, that none of them shall ever fall away from their faith, either totally or finally. Let us hearken to what they bring forth upon this account. From the apostle Paul they burnish themselves with such sayings as these: “Who,” speaking of Jesus Christ, “shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye

may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called,” &c. 1 Cor. 1:8, 9. Again: “ But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil,” &c. 2 Thess. 3:3. That neither of these Scriptures, nor any of like character, hath any communion with that doctrine of perseverance which hath been disowned hitherto, hath been sufficiently proved already, where the passages themselves were briefly opened, and a clear sense rendered, wherein God,

according to Scripture phrase, may be said to establish and confirm men unto the end, though these men be neither actually or with effect established nor confirmed thereunto. The Scripture frequently attributes actions, events, or effects, where means or endeavours are or have been used, or attempts made, yea, and when intentions only have been entertained in order to the acting or effecting such things; yea, and sometimes where occasion only hath been administered for the effecting of them. Instances

have been given formerly of all these kinds of expression in the Scripture. So that God may properly enough, as the Scripture counts propriety, be said to establish or confirm believers unto the end, when he vouchsafeth unto them means sufficient, both inward and outward, for their establishment and confirmation in this kind; or when he doth that which is proper and fitting for him to do for and towards the procuring and effecting the one and the other. Now God may do all this, and yet men neither be completely,

and to salvation, established nor confirmed unto the end, through their own negligence and carelessness to comport with the grace of God towards them in this behalf, and to do that which is required on their part towards the working out of their salvation. And,

2. That the apostle in neither of these places doth undertake or affirm that God will establish or confirm them unto the end, after any such manner, or in any such sense, but that they may possibly miscarry notwithstanding, appears

otherwise; ver. 5, he lifteth up this prayer for them: “And the Lord (or, now the Lord) direct your hearts into (or, unto, *εἰς*) the love of God, and into (or, unto) a patient waiting for Christ.” Doubtless, had he first absolutely promised unto them such an establishment and keeping from evil by God, the saving success or event whereof had no ways depended upon them, nor upon any such comportment on their part with it, which they might possibly have neglected or refused, he would not so immediately

abundantly sufficient to stablish them and to keep them from evil, yea, and which would actually stablish and keep them from evil, if they proved not extremely negligent and unfaithful to their own souls in despising them. Therefore,

3. Whereas the apostle, in both places, mentioneth the faithfulness of God, “God is faithful by whom ye were called,” &c. as that Divine principle in him, or attribute, out of which he is moved to establish and confirm them unto the end, and so to keep them from

evil; by faithfulness, he doth not necessarily mean that property or attribute in him which renders him true and just, or constant in the performance of his promises, (I mean, of his promises properly and commonly so called, and which are exhibited in words,) as if the apostle in these, or any the like places, supposed such a promise, one or more, made by him, by which he stands obliged to stablish or confirm his saints unto the end, by a strong and irresistible hand; but such a kind of faithfulness or

such a carefulness pr
respectfulness in him
towards Ms saints, which
answers the nature and
terms of such a relation
that accrueth unto Mm, by
making himself the
founder, father, or author
of this new being of
saintship unto them, and
withal, which answereth
the nature and condition of
such creatures or persons.
Now such a love or
respectfulness in God
towards the persons we
speak a, which expresseth
itself in vouchsafing unto
them a liberal and
bountiful sufficiency of

necessitated to use them in order hereunto. And accordingly the Holy Ghost in the words before us expressly testifieth on the behalf of God, that he will not suffer the saints to be tempted above what they are *able*, *i. e.* that he will afford them a sufficiency of means or strength to stand it out against all temptations whatsoever, that shall be permitted by him to befall them; not that he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they shall be willing, (to overcome or keep themselves upright under)

nor that he will not suffer them to be overcome. Nor is this sense or notion of God's faithfulness any whit differing from what Mr. Calvin himself conceiveth upon the place. "The apostle," saith he, "calleth God faithful, not only because he is true in his promises ; but it is as if he should say, the Lord is a certain keeper of those that are his, under whose tuition you are in safety: for he never leaveth Ms destitute. Therefore when he hath once received you into his care or trust, there is no cause why ye should

fear, *in case you depend wholly on him.*” So that he promiseth no absolute safety or security unto the saints upon God’s faithfulness, but only conditional, viz., if they shall wholly depend on him. Therefore,

2. For those words, “But will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,” they do not imply that God will make such a way for their escape from under temptation, that they shall and must necessarily bear it, (viz. without falling under it, or miscarrying by

it,) but that they may be *able* to bear it, (without suffering any such loss or misery by it,) and make an escape from under it in due time. This exposition of the place is confirmed by our English divines themselves in their annotations upon it. Common or incident to man, *i. e.*, say they, “such as usually befalleth men, even God’s dearest children, or such as *may* be borne by man in this life especially, assisted by God’s grace, which is always *sufficient* for God’s children.” That which is always sufficient is not necessarily at any time

efficient as to the actual production of that for which it sufficeth; and that which *may* be borne by a man without inconvenience, *may* also possibly be an occasion of evil unto him.

3, and lastly, The exhortation or declaration immediately following, “Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry,” plainly sheweth that there is no absolute promise from God concerning their safe bringing off from their temptation intended by the apostle in the words in hand. The mention or

expected upon another account and without such prayer. And besides, what efficacy or prevalency with God can be ascribed unto such a prayer which seeketh such things at his hand to the exhibition whereof he stands absolutely engaged by promise, purpose, or the like, and which should have been exhibited and given by him, whether such prayer had been made unto him or no ?

2. The same thing, in effect, which the apostle here prayeth that God would do for the

effectually provoked and engaged to put forth themselves to do what was requisite on their parts, for, and towards, such an actual preserving of themselves; which, notwithstanding, he clearly supposeth, in the passages immediately subjoined, that they very possibly might not do, even under such excitements and enlargements. “I give thee charge,” saith this apostle to Timothy, “in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, that thou keep this commandment without

For to inform, or insinuate unto such men, whom we have most seriously admonished and exhorted to be studious and careful of doing such and such things, that so they may be blameless unto the coming of Christ, that they shall certainly, and without any possibility of miscarrying, be preserved by God blameless hereunto, is nothing else, being truly interpreted, but to tempt them to neglect all our admonitions and exhortations in that behalf. Nor do the words following, “Faithful is he that calleth

unto him to do, with the like, when the doing or performance of such things is attributed unto God, wherein men also are to join and act with him, I shall here add,

1. That such explications or limitations as these, in the said cases, and others of like consideration, are frequently used, both by the ancient fathers, and by our late divines also, even such as are supposed our greatest adversaries in the present controversies. “Therefore,” saith Austin, speaking of Christ’s coming to save the world, “ as

speaking of wicked apostates, “they profane and abrogate the inviolable covenant of God, ratified by the blood of Christ.” Piscator also, in a like case, useth the same explication. “Thy weak brother shall perish, viz.,” saith he, “*as to thee*, or as much as in thee lieth.” Our English divines make use of the same explicatory expression in their annotations upon the same place.

2. Upon the same account I add this further; that there is very good reason for such attribution?, as we now speak of, whether unto

God, or men, or any other efficient cause; I mean, why such effects should be ascribed unto them, towards the production whereof they contribute any considerable degree of efficiency, whether the said effects be ever actually produced, or no; viz., because they do as much, and altogether the same, in such a case of a non-production of the effect, as they should do in a case of an actual production; and the reason of the non-attainment, or nonproduction of the effect, resteth not at all in

thereunto, though not without their own care and concurrence with him herein, the honour of this action, or keeping blameless, is most properly due unto him; there is no reason why it should not be ascribed unto him in the former case, as well as in the latter, or that he should not be as well said to keep those blameless, who, only through their own unworthiness, prove blameworthy, as those who, through his grace, attended with their own endeavours, are kept blameless. It is a saying approved, I suppose,

on all hands,

**Success in his attempts I
wish him none,
Who by the event will
judge an action.**

Therefore when God acteth uniformly in a way of grace, he is uniformly to be honoured, what deformity soever there be found in the event, issue, or consequent of his action.

5, and lastly, The words in hand cannot be judged promissory, or to suppose a promise, because then it would follow, that God

that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,” Philip. 1:6. This text is of the same interpretation with the former; only it hath not so much of the letter, or face, as some of them have, for an absolute promise from God unto the saints, that he will cause them to persevere. For,

1. That confidence, or persuasion rather, GREEK, which the apostle here professeth, is not said nor insinuated, to be built upon any promise, much less upon any absolute promise

common saying of divines,
“Deus non deserit, nisi
deserentem,” God forsakes
no man, but those who
forsake him first. That such
an apprehension of the holy
ingenuity and uprightness
of their hearts, as we speak
of, in conjunction with that
gracious principle or
disposition in God now
hinted, was the ground of
that good persuasion,
which he here expresseth,
most evidently appeareth
from the words
immediately following:
“Even as it is meet for me to
think this of you all, (viz.,
that he who hath begun a

good work in you will perform it, &c.) because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace,” Philip, 1:7. Therefore it was the present goodness or honesty of their hearts, expressed by their willingness to partake of the afflictions of the gospel, and of the saints, not any promise of God, which was the ground of that persuasion in him which he here mentioneth.

2. Had he had any absolute

made them confident, that the good work he speaks of should have been continued and perfected by God, without all interposals, or means to be used on their part; he had laid a very slippery foundation to build all those exhortations upon, which with much earnestness he presseth upon them in the sequel of his epistle ; and more particularly these, “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ,—that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel,” &c.,

Musculus, yet somewhat more fully, “God indeed,” saith he, “had begun a good work in the Philippians, but from whence was the apostle certain that he would perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ? I answer, he doth not say I am certain, but I am persuaded: it is one thing to be certain of a matter, another to be persuaded. A certainty of God’s works may be had out of his word, but a persuasion (may be had) from a good belief or reliance upon his goodness, and from some arguments of such his works. Certainty

deceives no man, but a man's persuasion often falls out otherwise than was hoped."

A third argument laid hold on, for the service of the doctrine of perseverance, is founded upon the immutable decree of election from eternity; and operates after this manner. A living or saving faith is given to none, but to those that are elect, in which respect, such a faith is called "The faith of the elect of God," Titus 1:1. And God hath determined to bring his elect to salvation by faith, with the greatest

certainty that can be. From hence then it follows, either that the elect must be brought to salvation by faith with so much certainty, that they shall never fall away from it, either totally or finally, or that God is changeable in his counsel. But this latter is at no hand to be admitted: therefore the former must stand. To this I answer,

1. That this argument demands that which is sacrilegious to grant, viz. that God hath from eternity elected a certain number of men personally, and, as it

were, by name considered, unto salvation, whom he purposeth to bring thereunto infallibly and without all possibility of miscarrying. The

inconsistency of this notion or conceit with the nature and attributes of God hath been already intimated; and the inconsistency of it with the main current of the Scriptures, reason, and truth itself, shall, with God's assistance, be demonstrated at large in the second part of this work. In the mean time, to the argument in hand, in respect of other particulars

gospel unto the saints and persons already called and gained into the faith, as became him, and as the nature of the gospel required of him in this behalf, but that he was faithful and serviceable also unto them in preaching it unto such as were yet infidels and unconverted, upon such terms that they also might be brought to the acknowledgment of it. That which in the former clause he calls “the faith of God’s elect,” in the latter he calls “the truth which is after godliness meaning, in both,

the doctrine of the gospel, which in twenty places besides, especially in the writings of this apostle, by a kind of metonymy, where the object is put for the act, is called “faith.

“It was needful,” saith Jude, “for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” Jude, ver. 3. Peruse Acts 6:7; Gal. 1:23; Phil. 1:27; Gal. 3:2, 5, &c. There is one place, amongst the rest, of like construction with this in hand, and that within two or three verses

of it, where the apostle calleth Titus his “natural son,” or a “natural son after the common faith,” or according” (as it is the same preposition, GREEK,) “to the common faith meaning, that he was a genuine and true saint or son of God, and of his, as an instrument of his spiritual being, according to all those holy qualifications which the gospel now commonly preached and known in the world requireth of those whom it owneth or adjudgeth for sons. The preposition GREEK is

frequently used in such a construction or sense as this: “But if for meat thy brother be made sorrowful, now walkest thou not” GREEK, “according to charity,” Rom. 14:15; *i. e.* according to the exigency of charity, or as charity requireth. So, GREEK, “according to his works,” Rom. 2:6; *i. e.* according to the exigency of his works, or as his works require. To pass by other instances without number, in the latter end of the verse in hand, “the truth which is” GREEK, “according unto godliness, is a kind of

periphrasis or description of the gospel as being such a truth, which godliness, as it were, requireth for her promotion and advancement in the world.

3. If, by “the faith of God’s elect,” we shall understand either the grace of faith given unto the elect of God, or the act of believing wrought in the elect of God, we shall make no good consistency of sense in the sentence: for if Paul should style himself “the servant of God and apostle of Jesus Christ according to the” grace of “faith,” or act of believing, in the “elect of

such faith as is here pretended,) but the excellent ones, as David calleth them, among the saints, whose faith is most signal and glorious. It is a frequent Hebraism in the Scriptures, to call both things and persons of special worth and excellency in their kind, “elect,” or chosen. See 1 Sam. 26:2; Isa. 22:7; Jer. 22:7. In this sense the Messiah was notioned and termed among the Jews, GREEK, “the elect of God,” Luke 23:35; and Christ himself is called a “corner-stone, elect and

faith, with the greatest certainty that can be. God hath indeed determined with the greatest certainty that can be, to bring his elect to salvation by faith (persevered in, or if persevered in,) but this is not to determine to bring them to salvation with the greatest certainty that can be by faith simply, or by faith, whether persevered in or no. So that the whole frame of this argument is crazy and loose; scarce is there a sound part in the whole body of it.

A fourth argument for the countenance of the said

so, or after such a manner, and upon such terms, as Christ in his prayer intendeth, not simply or absolutely, as the words of the prayer may sometimes seem to some to import. Hanging upon the cross he prayed for his enemies, and those that crucified him, that they might be forgiven, Luke 23:34. May it not be as well inferred from hence, that therefore all his enemies, and all such who in any sense crucify him, shall be forgiven by God, as it is argued from his praying for Peter that his faith might not fail, that the

faith of no true believer shall fail? Dr. Twiss's notion upon the case is not so authentic, and though admitted will not heal the difficulty. "Christ," saith he, "prayed for his enemies, ex officio hominis privati, *i. e.* according to the duty of a private man; but for his elect, as a Mediator." This is said, but not proved, nor, indeed, probable; for very unlikely it is that Christ, being, now in a full investiture of his great office of Mediator, should wave his interest in heaven by means hereof in his addressments unto God for

of Christ's prayer for those who crucified him was not that all their sins should be forgiven them, much less that simply and absolutely, *i. e.* without any intervening of faith or repentance, they should be forgiven, which had been to pray for that which is expressly contrary to the revealed will of God, but that that particular sin of their crucifying him should be forgiven them, *i. e.* should not be imputed unto them by way of bar to their repentance, either by any sudden or speedy destruction, or by a

delivering of them up to such a spirit of obstinacy or obduration under which men seldom or never repent ; which was also the sense of Stephen's prayer for those who stoned him: GREEK: " lay not this sin to their charge," Acts 7:60. So from Christ's prayer for all those that should believe in him, that they might all be one, as the Father and he were one, and as the Father was in him, and he in the Father, John 17:21, 22, it cannot be concluded that therefore there should never fall out any difference in judgment, any

absolutely, and consequently was heard absolutely : the matter and letter of his prayer was never denied unto him in such cases; but when he prayed that the cup, which he afterwards drank, might pass by him without his drinking it, though he prayed thrice, and that very earnestly, as the text saith, yet because he prayed this prayer with a reservation, desiring what he prayed for only conditionally, and with submission to his Father's will and the great exigency of mankind, these standing in opposition to

answer,

3.1. That from hence it apparently followeth, that therefore Peter's faith was in danger of failing, or might have failed, had not Christ interceded for him: and consequently, that God had not absolutely decreed the perseverance or non-failing of Peter's faith, or of the faith of any other man; otherwise, what efficacy can we ascribe to the prayer of Christ for Peter's faith? or how can it be known upon what account Peter's faith was preserved; whether that of Christ's prayer or that of

for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” Luke 22:31, 32. Now then, to infer from Christ’s prayer that Peter’s faith might not fail by or under a particular temptation, that therefore it could or should never fail, is a strain of no better logic than it would be to conclude that those who were with Paul in the ship never died, because God made a promise unto Paul that he would give their lives unto him as for that voyage, Acts 27:24.

3.3. If it be by the virtue

and efficacy of Christ's prayer for Peter's faith, that the faith of true believers can never fail, then was the faith of all true believers, before this prayer made by Christ, obnoxious unto a failing. If this, then neither was there nor is there any peremptory decree of God concerning the non-failing of the faith of believers. If so, then is there a possibility that their faith may fail; for whatsoever is possible in respect of the nature of the thing, and of second causes sufficient to produce it, may very possibly come to pass,

Christ to him, “ When thou art *converted*, strengthen,” &c. Men are not said to be *converted* a gradu ad gradum, sed a specie ad speciem; *i. e.* from a lesser degree of faith to a greater, but from unbelief unto faith. And besides, that Peter, upon his denial of Christ, was, until his repentance, in the state and condition of those who shall be denied by Christ at the great day, which could not be under any degree of true faith remaining in him, is evident from that general and express intermination of Christ, Matt. 10:33,

no further than where the same or like occasion and ground take place; and intimation hath been given formerly, that the apostles, in respect of that great and extraordinary service of carrying the name of Jesus Christ up and down the world, so full of enmity and opposition to it, had many prerogative favours vouchsafed unto them by Christ, wherein the generality of believers, having no such engagement lying upon them, have no ground or reason to expect an equality or share with them: therefore there is

heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us,” Heb. 9:24; and, “since he ever liveth to make intercession for them,” Heb. 7:25. From hence it is thus argued: If those for whom Christ intercedes at the right hand of God may fall away from their faith so as to perish notwithstanding, then is the intercession of Christ ineffectual and insufficient to preserve them. But the intercession of Christ is not ineffectual, &c. Ergo. To this I answer,

1. It is no where affirmed that Christ intercedes for the perseverance of the saints in

an excellent rate of consolation in every estate and condition against all interposures of any creature whatsoever to the contrary. This to be the tenor and effect of Christ's intercession for his saints is evident from the first of the three passages cited; and for that demand, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" it is not meant of separating us from that love wherewith we love Christ, but from that love wherewith Christ loveth us, viz. as we are saints, and abide in his love by keeping his

intercession of Christ for the saints is thus stated or taught by the Holy Ghost.

2. The purport, end, and intent of the intercession of Christ for the saints is the same with those of his death for them; only the Scripture placeth, though not more virtue, yet a clearer ground of hope or confidence unto the saints for their obtaining the same ends and blessings, in the intercession of Christ for them, than in his death. This is clear from the place lately cited: “Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is

many other places. Thus then we clearly see that Christ's intercession no ways mediates in the behalf of the common doctrine of perseverance. However,

A sixth argument for the confirmation of it is this: Whatsoever true believers ask or pray for unto the Father in Christ's name, especially being necessary unto salvation, that they certainly and always obtain, John 16:23 ; 1 John 5:14. But they daily pray for constancy or perseverance in true faith, as, viz. when they pray unto God, that he would “ not lead them into

temptation, but deliver them from evil,” Matt. 6:13. Therefore certainly they obtain perseverance of him. I answer,

1. This whole argument might be granted both without any prejudice to the doctrine which we maintain, as also without advantage to that doctrine which it undertakes to protect. For the question is not whether the perseverance of the saints be a thing possible, or whether it may not be obtained by a diligent use of such means, such as frequent or daily prayer

unto God in faith is: but whether there be not a possibility that the saints may neglect the use of such means which are necessary and proper for the obtaining or maintaining of it. Therefore,

2. When the minor proposition saith, that “true believers daily pray for perseverance,” &c., it doth, in effect, assert that which is questionable between the controverters for a proof of itself, and so is guilty of that infirmity in arguing which logicians call *petitio principii*, a begging of the question. For to say that

may he “done on earth, as it is in heaven,” *i. e.* perfectly, for so it is done in heaven. Therefore his will is done perfectly on earth; and consequently perfection is actually attained in this life. Let the perseverists answer this argument of the perfectionists, and they will be able to answer their own.

A seventh argument upon the former account, is this: They who shall certainly and faithfully be preserved and kept by Christ unto the end, shall never, either totally or finally, miscarry or fall away. But all true

believers are and shall be thus kept by Christ. Ergo. The minor is proved by these texts of Scripture, John 6:37, 39; 10:27, 28; 17:12; 13:1; 1 Cor.1:8; Eph. 5:23; Jude 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 12:2; 1 Pet. 1:5. I answer,

1. That the strength and substance of this argument hath received answer in full already, when we opened at large several of the principal texts insisted upon for the proof of the assumption: whereof we shall give notice presently. Yet,

2. "We answer, that the

cometh unto him,” or, that is coming unto him, GREEK. But this proveth not, but that he that is on his way towards Christ, may go back before he comes fully to him; nor that he that is fully come to him, is under no possibility of departing from him. It only proveth, that there is not the least disposition or inclination in Christ to discourage any man whatsoever from coming to him, nor to deny entertainment or acceptance, to whosoever shall come to him, and while he shall be willing to

stay, or abide with him. And elsewhere he persuades and exhorts those that are come to him, to “abide in him,” or with him, as John 15:4, and threatens those who shall not abide with him, John 15:4, 6; Heb. 10:38, both which evidently suppose a possibility of their departure from him, who at present are with him.

Whereas, verse 39, he expresseth himself thus, “And this is the Father’s will, that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at

to the uttermost for their preservation, but to themselves, who withdraw themselves from his custody.

Concerning the third place, John 10:27, 28, we spoke largely in the next preceding chapter, page 284, &c., where we showed in what sense Christ, speaking of his sheep, saith, that “no man shall pluck them out of his hand.” The next place, John 17:12, presenteth us with these words, from Christ in his prayer to the Father, “Those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and

none of them was lost, excepting only the “ son of perdition, as it immediately follows, who was not lost neither for lack of good and sufficient keeping, (wherein doubtless he did partake with his fellows,) but through the great malignity or wretchedness of his own will, his good keeping notwithstanding. So that neither can hence any thing be gathered to prove any such preservation of the saints by Christ, but that they may nevertheless decline, both totally and finally.

The two next places, viz.,

John 13:1, and 1 Cor. 1:8, upon former examinations, have been found strangers to that cause, which they are here brought to plead. The former, Chap. 10. page 286; the latter, in the same chapter, page 265, and page 323 of this present chapter.

The Scripture next to these, is Eph. 5:23, where Christ, according to the more general sense of interpreters, for some understand it, not of Christ, but of the husband, is termed “the Saviour of his body.” But neither doth this expression import any such

corporal, putrefaction. He that vouchsafeth to be the head of a body consisting, either in whole, or in part, of flesh and blood, in, and by this very act of grace, condescendeth to be a head of such members, which are very capable of sinning, and therefore not incapable of dismembering themselves through sin.

To that of Jude, verse 1, “to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called,” I answer,

1. It is not denied, but that Christ doth preserve his

saints, and that with much care and tenderness, yea, and watcheth over them for good: the question is, whether by his preserving them, he imposeth an unconquerable necessity upon them of persevering in faith unto the end. The simple preservation of the saints by Christ, is all that can be concluded from this Scripture, the manner of it, or the terms on which it is performed, are not at all so much as intimated here.

2. The participle, GREEK, preserved, being of the preter-perfect tense, imports only that the

incongruous foundation to build that serious exhortation upon, wherein he addresses himself unto them, verse 3, viz., to contend earnestly for the faith. For what need they contend earnestly for the faith, who have assurance from God, that they shall be preserved in the faith, whether they contend for it, or no? And if they were, against all possible interveniencies whatsoever, to be preserved by Christ in the faith, to what purpose, or with what coherence of discourse, doth he remind

them of the example of God's severity upon many unbelieving Israelites, even after he had delivered them out of the land of Egypt; as likewise upon those angels, who kept not their first standings? verses 5, 6. The very proposal of such examples unto them, as these, plainly enough supposes, that they also were liable to suffer the same severity from God, upon the like terms.

The next place, 2 Tim.1:12, acquaints us with the apostle Paul's spirit, as far as these words will extend: "I know whom I

have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him, against that day. I answer, That this place of all the rest is eccentric to the business in hand. For it speaks only of the power of God to keep; whereas this never came within the verge of the question. Or if the will of God to keep, be here included, or supposed also; neither was it ever questioned by me, whether God be willing to keep His saints, or no. That which I oppose, is that manner, which some obtrude,

affirming, that God preserves his saints upon such terms, after such a manner, that he peremptorily hereby necessitates their perseverance. Certain I am that the Scripture in hand gives no such sound as this. Besides, that depositum, or thing committed by him unto God, which the apostle here speaks of, was not his faith, (this can in no very tolerable sense be said to be committed unto God,) but rather his soul, which he committed to the care and safe-keeping of God. Nor is there the least doubt

or question to be made, but that God was both able, and willing, to keep this safe, as long as the apostle was desirous and willing to intrust him with it, and to suffer it to lie in his hand. But this proveth not, but that the apostle himself was at liberty to have recalled, or taken back this his depositum out of the hand of God: in which case he had been discharged from taking further care of it.

Whereas, Heb. 12:2, Christ is styled the author and finisher of our faith, or rather, of the faith, GREEK, the particle, our, is not in

the Greek, it doth not imply any acting of Christ, in, about, or upon, our faith, in a physical way, or with any efficiency (properly so called) much less with any necessitating efficiency; hut that he was an absolute or perfect captain, or leader, in that way of faith, wherein we all stand bound to follow him at the peril of our souls; he was dismayed, discouraged, daunted at nothing, which he was called to suffer or endure, in his course; but with an excellent and unconquerable spirit of faith, held on his way

through the midst of those threatenings and devouring afflictions, which encountered him, until he came where glory and blessedness waited for him, and attended his coming. This to be the sense and meaning of the said words, the carriage of the context round about doth perfectly manifest: we shall not need to argue for it. So that Christ is called, GREEK, *i.e.* the archleader, or captain, of faith, not because by any physical or proper efficiency, much less because by any irresistibleness of power,

he worketh the beginning of faith in his saints, but because he marched (as it were) in the head of his saints, and like a valiant and resolute captain, led the way of faith unto all that should believe in him, and showed them how to walk in it. And so, GREEK, the perfecter of faith, not because he actually consummates, or perfecteth, the work, or grace of faith in his saints; (for this work is never brought to perfection in them, in this life; and though it be, in a sense, perfected, in the life to

blessedness and glory in the end of his race, which God hath promised unto all those that are faithful unto death.

To the last of the texts cited in favour of the argument in hand, 1 Pet. 1:5, plenty of light hath been already given in Chap. 10. whereby it fully appears that it holds no correspondence at all with the opinion or doctrine which pretends unto it in the argument.

A further argument advanced by some to promote the common doctrine of perseverance,

uncapable of prefall, is this: They who are sealed in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, that they shall certainly be saved, can neither totally nor finally lose their faith: but all true believers are thus sealed; ergo, they cannot but persevere without any either total or final remission of their faith. For the proof of the minor these Scriptures are produced, 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30; which all speak of the obsequiation of believers by the Spirit of God. To this also we answer,

1. By distinguishing the

must of necessity retain their faith without all possibility of any either total or final miscarriage of it. Therefore,

2. We answer further, that “the sealing with the Spirit,” spoken of in the Scripture specified, is the latter kind of sealing, not the former, *i. e.* such a sealing which depends upon the faith of those that are sealed: as in the beginning or first impression of it, so in the duration or continuance of it; and consequently hath none other certainty of its continuance but only the

continuance of the said faith, which, as we have already proved in part, and shall, God willing, further prove ere long, being uncertain, the sealing depending on it must needs be uncertain also and reversible. That the sealing proveable from the Scriptures mentioned depends upon the faith of the sealed, is evident by the tenor of one, and by the context and plain circumstances relating to them all: “ In whom also,” saith the apostle, Eph.1:13, “*after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Spirit*

circumstances in order to the breaking or dissolving of the contract ratified by them, yet are they seldom or never engaging or obliging on either side upon such terms that no possible interposition, whether of providences or other things, can discharge them. A contract of marriage, ratified and confirmed by both parties, with earnest given and received, may, notwithstanding, lawfully be dissolved upon an act of adultery committed by the one party, if the other pleaseth. There is the same

consideration likewise of confirmation by earnest in other cases.

4, and lastly, If the apostle's intent had been to inform the Ephesians that the gift of the Holy Spirit, which they had received from God, was “ the earnest of their inheritance” upon such terms that no unworthiness or wickedness whatsoever on their parts could ever hinder the actual collation of this inheritance upon them, he had plainly prevaricated with that most serious admonition wherein he addresseth

forth in the Scriptures, does any ways reach the point in question. Because the question is not whether the saints, viz. as such, and abiding such, shall stand for ever in the greatest prosperity, safety, and glory; but, as hath oft, in effect, been said, whether those who have been saints at any time heretofore, must necessarily be such at this day, and cannot possibly degenerate into any other kind or sort of men for ever. The similitudes produced evince no such thing as this. And therefore,

2. I answer in particular, 1. That the comparison of a man “delighting in the law of the Lord,” Psal. i, to the tree there described, doth not suppose that he can never cease delighting in his law; nor is any such thing as this signified by the non-falling of the leaf of this tree: too frequent experience commandeth acknowledgment on both sides that the saints themselves, or men sometimes delighting in the law of the Lord, may otherwhile delight themselves in ways of vanity and great

is clearly supposed, and a suspension likewise, as well of the said punishments as rewards hereupon, according as the change shall be. Thus wicked men in several kinds, whoremongers, adulterers, idolaters, extortioners, drunkards, &c. 1 Cor. 6:9, 10 ; Heb. 13:4, are very frequently threatened with the loss of the kingdom of heaven, without any mention made either of that possibility they are in of repenting afterwards, or of any reversal of such a punishment, in case they shall repent; whereas it is a

clear case, from other Scriptures, that both the one and the other are supposed notwithstanding, as, viz. where forgiveness of sins is promised unto sinners of all kinds upon repentance. I forbear to cite places, being so frequent and obvious. So God often promiseth life and salvation unto just and righteous men, without mentioning that possibility they are in of turning aside from their righteousness, or any deprivation or loss of life and salvation they are like to sustain, in case they shall thus turn aside;

simply that man thus delighting at present, but such a man who should constantly and with perseverance thus delight, is evident from the antithesis which the psalm maketh between him and the wicked man, who is described as perseveringly wicked unto the end. “Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment,” verse 5; and again: “And the way of the wicked shall perish,” verse 6; which expressions clearly show, that by the sinner or wicked man, here opposed to the godly, is not meant simply

of them before we come to receive our reward. So again: “The love of many shall wax cold; but he that continueth unto the end shall be saved,” Matt. 24:12, 13. The Galatians did for a time run well, Gal. 5:7, yea, and suffered many things for Christ’s and the gospel’s sake, Gal. 3:4; but afterwards they were bewitched, Gal. 3:1, proved disobedient to the truth, and so fell from that grace, Gal. 5: 4, and favour of God wherein they stood whilst they obeyed the gospel. But we shall, God willing, in due time muster greater

numbers of such passages as these.

The third and last comparison, Luke 8:8, hath less colour in the face of it than either of the former. In this, they who receive the word with good and honest hearts, are compared unto “seed that fell on good ground, which springeth up and beareth fruit an hundred fold.” For,

1. It is not said, that the seed which fell on good ground are they who hear the word with a good and honest heart, but who, having heard the word, detain or keep it in a good

and honest heart. The tenor of the place in Luke, is this: GREEK, Luke 8:15. So that it is not simply the hearing of the word with a good and honest heart that brings men under the comparison of the seed that fell into good ground; but the retaining and keeping of it in such a heart, and that so as to bring forth fruit with patience, *i. e.* with patient continuance in well doing, whatever temptations they shall meet with to interrupt them in their way, as the word is translated, Rom. 2:7, both by our English translators, and by Calvin

hath been for a long season,
may yet recover himself
from under this great
disadvantage, and so
believe unto salvation;
though such a recovery as
this be very difficult and
rare, which is all that our
Saviour intended to show
or teach, in this part of the
parable. There is the same
consideration of all the
other grounds, or kinds of
hearers. So that though he
that should hear the word
with a good and honest
heart should he compared
to the seed falling on good
ground, yet could there not
an absolute necessity he

concluded from hence, that therefore such a man must bring forth fruit unto salvation, hut only a great likelihood and hopeful probability that such a hearer will not miscarry by the way, but will hold out with patience in well doing unto the end, and so be saved. So that there is nothing in this argument neither, to keep that doctrine from falling, which is already shaken. Therefore,

A tenth argument is built by some for the honour of the said doctrine, upon such Scriptures, which

testify that such as do not persevere, but make either a total or final defection, in, or from the faith, were never true believers, or by a true faith ingrafted into Christ; and that make it the property or badge of a true believer that he still doth continue in the faith, The Scriptures produced to justify this account, are John 8:31; 1 John 2:19; Heb. 3:6, 14. To this also we answer,

1. In general, three things,
1. That there is no good consistency of sense in it, to say, that they fall away from faith, who never were

at it, never were true believers. If it be said, that men are said to fall away from faith, when they fall away from such a faith as they had, as viz., from a temporary faith, or a light and superficial believing of the gospel, &c. I answer, 1. If this be the faith, from which men are said to fall in the Scriptures, then must this needs be the faith also, wherein they are exhorted and charged to persevere. For those that have in any kind, or with any faith embraced the Gospel, and made profession of it, are

exhorted to continue in the faith. Now that the Holy Ghost should persuade men to continue in a temporary faith (I mean in such a faith, which is not accompanied with justification, or, which worketh not by love, or which will certainly fail) imports a kind of impious contradiction. 2. If this were all the apostasy or backsliding from faith mentioned in the Scriptures, viz. to apostatise from a temporary, false, hypocritical, dead faith, the sin of apostasy would not

faith and profession unto the end. This exposition of the places is fully consistent with the main drift and scope of the epistle, which was not to teach the Hebrews to know whether they were true believers, or no, at present, much less to teach them this knowledge, by what they should approve themselves to be, to the day of their death, which had been to give men darkness to see by, but to animate, encourage, urge, and press them to continue constant in that faith which at present they had embraced,

regeneration, cannot either totally or finally lose them or fall away from them. The places levied upon this account are, Rom. 6:2, 8—11; 1 John 3:9; 5:4, 18; Jude 3; Apoc. 20:6. To this I answer,

That upon due examination none of these places will be found guilty of any such doctrine as they stand charged with in this argument. We have at large, in the former chapter, cleared the innocence of one of them, viz. 1 John 3:9, which hears the greatest heat and burthen of the charge; to

the rest we answer in
coarse.

Rom. 6:2. "How shall we
that are dead to sin live any
longer therein?" These
words import no
impossibility of their
returning unto sin who are
dead to it, at least, who by
the tenor and band of their
Christian profession are
dead to it, for of this kind of
death to sin the apostle
seems here to speak, hut
only a great and signal
unworthiness in them so to
do. So that the
interrogative particle
GREEK, how, carries some
such sense with it as this:

with what face; or with what conscience; or with what comfort, peace, or the like. “*How* then,” saith Joseph to his mistress, “can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” Gen. 39:9. *How* can I do it, doth not here imply an impossibility for Joseph to have committed the sin, hut only a great unseemliness or unworthiness. See also Matt. 6:4; Gal. 4:9, &c. Calvin himself stretcheth the same line of interpretation over the Scripture in hand which we have done, affirming that

“Paul here discourseth what manner of persons it becometh us to be, when God hath showed mercy to us and adopted us freely; and by an adverb of the future tense sheweth what kind of change ought to follow our justification.”

The contents of verses 8—11 of the same chapter, are of the same import and interpretation with the former. “Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised again from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over

him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," &c. The intent of the apostle in these passages is nothing less than to teach or insinuate a non-possibility of their returning or living again unto sin who at present are dead unto it: such a supposal as this is diametrically inconsistent with the emphatical energy of his exhortation, verse 12, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies," as likewise with many other

pregnant Scriptures, which shall be consulted with in due time, but to set forth the spiritual condition of the children of God, partly in respect of what it is, partly in respect of what it should or ought to be, by a metaphor or similitude borrowed from what happened unto Christ corporally or literally after this manner. As Christ died once corporally, for the abolishing or taking away of the sins of men, but now liveth and acteth for the advancement of the glory of God, and is not obnoxious unto any more dyings in

For to what purpose should they be so solemnly, so seriously cautioned against that whereby they were not in any possibility of suffering inconvenience? If it were impossible that sin should reign in their mortal bodies after they were once dead to it, needless and vain had that exhortation been, “Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies.” The common maxim among divines and interpreters of Scriptures is, that similitudes or metaphors do not run on all four; meaning that they axe not to he extended or applied to

to the usual import of such Scripture expressions concluded from this place, is, 1. That all the true-born sons and daughters of God, by means of that spirit of faith which works in them, in this estate of regeneration, are for the present above the temptations and allurements of the world, wherewith others are overcome, and hereby remain in imminent danger of perishing. 2. That they are likewise in such a posture, or condition, by means of their faith, that if they shall GREEK, (as the

apostle Paul's word is,) quit themselves like men, and act their faith, or with their faith, according to the virtue, vigour, and usefulness of it, they may make good the ground, or standing, which they have gained, and maintain their present victory or conquest over the world, unto the end. But here is not the least or lightest intimation given, but that those, who are at present victorious over the world, by the aid and working of their faith, may through carelessness, security, and inconsiderateness, suffer

stumble, or, he doth not ordinarily stumble,) “because he seeth the light of the sun. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth,” (*i. e.*, he is apt to stumble, or he often stumbleth) because there is no light in him, “John 11:9, 10. So likewise the apostle Paul: “He that is unmarried, careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord (*i. e.* frequently he doth so, or he hath an opportunity, which the married hath not, to do it: for otherwise we know, that many unmarried persons are far from caring

on that hand, yea, and frequently do so. That which followeth is of the same character. “There is a difference also between a wife, and a virgin: the unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and in spirit: but she that is married, careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.” The book of the Proverbs aboundeth with such veins of expression as these, viz., where men of such or such a qualification, or relation, are simply said to do so or

Therefore when John saith,
“ Whosoever is bom of God
sinneth not and, that “ he
that is begotten of God
keepeth himself,” &c.
nothing can be concluded
from such sayings, but only
that men regenerate have a
principle within them,
disposing and inclining
them unto ways of
righteousness, and to
vigilancy over themselves;
or that regenerate men do
frequently abstain from the
customary ways of sinning
in the world, and watch
over themselves : not, that
every regenerate man,
without exception, doth

these things.

2. Some understand the words, “ whosoever is bom of God, sinneth not, but keepeth himself,” &c., in a declarative sense, thus : Whosoever desireth to approve himself, whether to himself, or others upon any sufficient ground, for a man regenerate, or bom of God, he must abstain from ways of sin, and watch narrowly and carefully over himself) that the devil may not do him the least hurt: (as our English annotators interpret the phrase, “toucheth him not”:) This interpretation reduceth the

place to a like sense and notion with that in the same epistle, (formerly opened,) “ little children, let no man deceive you: He that doth righteousness, is righteous,” 1 John 3:7; meaning, that no man hath any sufficient ground, either to judge himself a righteous person, or to expect to be so judged by others unless he doth righteousness, *i. e.* lives holily, and in a conscientious observance of the commandments of God, See Chap. 9. page 232. There are many assertions and sayings in Scripture of

like consideration with this. Now this interpretation doth not find in the words any impossibility for the regenerate man to sin, or any absolute necessity that he must so keep himself, that the evil one shall not touch him; but only a necessity for him to refrain the one, and to practise the other, if he desires upon good and sufficient grounds, either the comfort within, or the honour without, of being born of God.

As for that argument, which some build upon the metaphor or similitude of

Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child,” Eccl. 11:5; so is the manner of God’s dealing with the heart, soul, and conscience of a man, in and about the act of regeneration, of a very abstruse consideration, and remote from the apprehensions and understandings of men, according to that of our Saviour, “ The wind bloweth where it listeth; and thou hearest the sound thereof: but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the

Spirit,” John 3:8. That these particulars are, or may be, imported in the metaphor or resemblance of the natural generation, may be proved from the Scriptures, but that the impossibility for a man to pass from that species, wherein he was bom, into another, which attendeth the birth natural, was intended to signify a correspondent impossibility in the birth spiritual, can no more be proved, than that this generation or birth consists in a change of essentials, and not of qualities only, or

instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel,” 1 Cor. 4:15, import the contrary. For, 1. He doth not say, that it was not possible for them to have many fathers, but only that *de prasenti*, they had not many. This implies, that Paul was the instrument of God, for and in their conversion to the faith at the beginning; and withal, that they at present persisted in that faith, or species of believers, whereunto, or wherein, he had begotten them. But it

no ways supposeth, or implies, either that they were unchangeable in that Divine nature, wherein he had begotten them; or incapable of being begotten the second time, in case they had been actually changed. 2. Our English divines, in their annotations upon the place, by “ fathers,” understand such as were tender over them, and free in their teachings; as by instructors, GREEK, schoolmasters, who are imperious in their teachings, and teach for hire. 3, and lastly, In saying

pillar or prop of the doctrine we oppose. For,

1. By faith, is not here meant the grace of faith, or justifying faith, but, (by a metonymy, either of the efficient for the effect, or of the object for the faculty,) as in twenty places besides, the doctrine, or word of faith. “Faith,” say our English annotators upon the place, “is not here taken for faithfulness, nor for credulity, nor for confidence, nor for faith of miracles, but for the doctrine of the Gospel, which is to be believed. So hope is taken for the thing

hoped for,” Rom. 8:24; Col. 1:5. This exposition of the word *faith*, is confirmed by the apostle himself, affirming it to have been GREEK, “once delivered,” not once given, “to the saints;” or rather to holy men. It is very improper to say of the grace or habit of faith, that this was delivered, but most proper of the doctrine of faith. This doctrine is said to have been once delivered to holy men, to imply either that it hath been delivered by God so, that he intends never to make any change or alteration of it, or addition

purity of being.

2. If the place should be understood of the grace of justifying faith, nothing could be inferenced from it, but only that they, who are once possessed of such a faith, shall keep and make good this their, possession, if they quit themselves like men, and shall strive in good earnest to effect it. This is nothing but what is fully consonant with the doctrine asserted by us.

Neither hath the last Scripture mentioned any right hand of fellowship to give unto the doctrine now gainsaid. For the Holy

where our Saviour himself, in his epistle to the Church of Smyrna, promiseth exemption from harm by the second death, only upon condition of victory, i. e. of such a victory, which imports a standing fast and faithful unto Christ in the profession of the gospel, against all temptations, allurements, persecutions, and whatsoever should attempt their loyalty and faithfulness in this kind, unto the end, “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” The sense now given of these words, is fully

confirmed by those in the
verse immediately
preceding, “Be thou faithful
unto death, and I will give
thee a crown of life as also
by other passages from the
same blessed hand, to other
churches. “And he that
overcometh,” saith he to
the church of Thyatira,
“and keepeth my words
unto the end, to him will I
give power over the
nations,” Rev. 2:26. So to
the church of Sardis, “ehold
I come quickly; *hold* that
fast, which thou hast, that
no man take thy crown,”
Rev. 3:11. To which many
others of like character

might be added from other places: but this hath been done already in part, and remains to be done more fully in place more convenient. In the meantime we clearly see that however the received doctrine of perseverance saith unto the Scriptures, “Scriptures, Scriptures,” yet these make no other answer, but, “Depart from us, we know you not,” you are a doctrine that gather not with us, but scatter what we gather.

CHAPTER 12.

The former digression yet further prosecuted : and a possibility of Defection in the saints, or true believers, and this unto death, clearly demonstrated from the Scriptures.

IT is the saying, as I remember, of Quintilian : “ Many men might have been wise, had they not prevented themselves with an opinion of being wise before they came to it.” Nor is there much question to

left me in a great strait and
exigency of thoughts,
between contrary opinions,
(a condition that hath more
than once befallen me,) that
brief periphrasis or
description of the gospel,
which the apostle delivers,
calling it the truth which is
according unto godliness,
hath upon serious
consideration, often
delivered me; yea, and
brought me to such a clear
understanding of the letter
itself, wherein before I was
entangled, that I evidently,
and with the greatest
satisfaction I could desire,
discerned the mind of God

truth, and comporting with the gospel, the face whereof was in the clearest and directest manner set for the promotion and advancement of godliness amongst men; and to refuse that which stood in opposition hereunto. Nor did I find it any matter of much difficulty, or doubtfulness of dispute within myself, especially in such cases, and between such opinions, wherein I most desired satisfaction, to decide and determine, which of the two opinions competitors for my consent, was the greater

friend unto godliness. That competent knowledge which God had given me, of the general course of the Scriptures, together with the experimental knowledge I had of mine own heart, the workings, reasonings, and debates thereof, seconded with that long observation which I had made of the spirits, principles, and ways of men in the world, together with their ebbings and flowings, their risings and fallings, their advancing and retreats, their firstings and lastings, in matters of religion, in conjunction

with that light of reason and understanding, which I have in common with other men; these together were sufficient to teach me, and that to a plenary satisfaction in most cases, what doctrines, what opinions are of the richest and most cordial sympathy and compliance with godliness, and what on the other hand are but faint and loose in their correspondency with her, or otherwise secret enemies unto her.

That that doctrine, which asserteth a possibility even of a final defection from

faith, in true believers, well understood, riseth up in the cause of godliness with a far higher hand, than the common opinion about their perseverance, hath been sufficiently, though but in part, proved already, Chap. 9.: the further demonstration hereof sleepeth not, but only awaiteth its season. Our present task is to argue the letter of the Scripture for confirmation of the said doctrine, and to evince the truth thereof from the oracles of God. This done, we shall, God willing, advance some grounds of

that he hath done, shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel, is not my way equal ? are not your ways unequal ? when a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them: for his iniquity that he hath, done, shall he die, Ezek. 18:24, &c.” What more can the understanding, judgment,

soul, or conscience of a man reasonably desire, for their establishment in any truth whatsoever, than is delivered by God himself in this passage, to evince the possibility of a righteous man's declining from his righteousness, and that unto death ? The latter words of the passage are conclusive hereof, against and above all contradiction. "When a righteous man turneth away, &c. and dieth in them," (*i. e.* repenteth not of them, forsaketh them not, before his death) "for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die (*viz.*

the second death, or perish everlastingly.) For that this death is meant, at least included, in this latter clause, is evident, because otherwise we shall both make an unsavoury tautology in the sentence, and destroy all congruity of sense besides. For without such a supposition, the prophet must be supposed to speak thus: “When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them,” (*i. e.* leaveth his natural life under the guilt of them, and without

in full consonancy with the general current of the Scriptures, the sense rising thus: when a righteous man shall forsake the ways of righteousness, wherein he hath formerly walked, and turn aside into ways of wickedness, and not repent of these ways before his death, this man shall die the death of the impenitent and unbelievers, which is the second death. In this sense, the sentence perfectly accords (for substance of matter) with such passages as these: “Know ye not the unrighteous shall not

inherit the kingdom of God? be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 9:10. And again: “For this ye know, that no whoremonger or unclean person, or covetous man which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience,” Eph. 5:5, 6. And (to omit many others)

repentance will deliver a man from a temporal death, yet will it not deliver him from eternal death. For as the truest repentance that is, though continued in, will not deliver a man from a temporal or natural death, but will most certainly deliver him from eternal death: in like manner, though apostasy and backsliding from ways of righteousness, persevered in, do not always expose a man to a temporal death, or bring this death upon him, yet they always render man obnoxious to eternal death.

Besides, when God threateneth such backsliders as we speak of, that when they shall commit iniquity, &c., “all the righteousness that they have done formerly, shall not be mentioned,” *i. e.* as Calvin himself interprets, “shall not come into any account, as to matter of reward,” evident it is, that if it shall not come into any account at all, as for example to obtain from God so much as the reward of a temporal deliverance, much less shall it turn to any such account, as to be rewarded with that “great

recompense of reward,”
salvation.

Again that death which God here threateneth against that double or two-fold iniquity of backsliding, is opposed to that life, which is promised to repentance, and perseverance in well-doing. But this life is confessed by all, to be eternal life; therefore the death opposite to it must needs be eternal, or the “second death,” When the apostle saith, “the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord,” Rom.

6:23, is it not evident from the antithesis or opposition in the sentence, between the death and life mentioned in it, that by that death, which he affirms to be “the wages of sin,” is meant eternal death? How else will the opposition stand?

Yet again; when God in the Scriptures threatens impenitent persons with death for their sins, doubtless he intends, and means, eternal death, or that death which is the wages of sin. Otherwise we have no sufficient ground to believe, or think, that

men dying in their sins without repentance, shall suffer “the vengeance of eternal fire,” but only a temporal or natural death; which the righteous and truly penitent themselves suffer as well as they. Therefore, to say that God threatens impenitent apostates, in the place in hand, with a temporal death only, when as elsewhere he threatens impenitency under the lightest guilt of all, with eternal death, is, in effect, to represent him as vehement and sore in his dissuasives from ordinary

and lesser sins; but indifferent and remiss in dissuading from sins of the greatest provocation.

Once more; if it be only a temporal death, which God here threateneth against the sins of apostasy, dying under the guilt of their apostasy, and of all the sins they have committed therein, without repentance then may men under the guilt of the greatest and foulest abominations, remain in the greatest love and favour of God, as just and righteous men; yea, and without repentance, not

only escape damnation, but also inherit eternal life. And “where then is the God of judgment?” Mal. 2:17. Or what will become of that great voice of the Scriptures, which everywhere calleth men to “repentance for the forgiveness of sins?”

That comparative allusion, of the leper under the law, wherewith the Synod of Dort, it seems, much pleased themselves, and others also since, of the same judgment with them, reacheth not the case, nor administers any relief at all to their cause, against the

Scripture in hand. “The leper,” say they, “among the Jews, was enforced for a time,” meaning, whilst his leprosy was upon him, “to want his house; but yet he did not, in this time, lose the right of title which he had to this house, because, upon his healing, or cleansing, he might again possess it.” This comparison, I say, squares not with the business in hand. For, 1. The reason why the person leproously affected did not lose the right he had to his house before he was leprous, by his becoming a leper, was,

righteous man may die, in or under his apostasy from righteousness, and in his committing of iniquity. “When a righteous man,” saith he, “turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *and dieth in them*, for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die,” Ezek. 18:26. Therefore all this while the prophet of God, and the Synod of Dort, are two.

Nor is that distinction made choice of by Dr. Prideaux to arbitrate and umpire the difference between them, able to set them through or make

them friends. “There is,” saith he, “a double righteousness, one inherent, or of works, by which we are sanctified; another imputed, or of faith, whereby we are justified. A righteous man may turn aside from his own righteousness, viz. from his holiness, and fall into very heinous sins; but it doth not follow from hence that therefore he hath wholly shaken from him,” or out of him, “the righteousness of Christ.” But,

1. The Doctor here presents us with a piece of new

divinity, in making
sanctification and
justification no more
intimate friends than that
one can live without the
company and presence of
the other. Doubtless, if a
man's justification may
stay behind when his
holiness is departed, that
assertion of the apostle will
hardly stand—"Without
holiness no man shall see
the Lord," Heb. 12:14. And
if "they that are Christ's,"
i.e. who believe in Christ,
and thereby are justified,
"have crucified the flesh
with the affections and
lusts," (another assertion of

Now, we have, upon several grounds proved, that the righteous man under that apostasy wherein Ezekiel describes and presents him, is pronounced by God a child not of a temporal, but of eternal death and condemnation. This, indeed, the Doctor denies, but gives no reason of his denial, for which I blame him not: only I must crave leave to say, that the chair weigheth not so much as one good argument with me, much less as many. So that all this while, he that spake, and still speaks, unto the world by Ezekiel,

needs no more be done, though much more might be done, yea, and hath been done by others, than what the learned Doctor, so lately named, hath done himself for demolishing it. Having propounded the argument from the place in Ezekiel according to the import of the interpretation asserted by us, “ Some,” saith he, “ answer, that a condition proves nothing in being; which, how true soever it may be in respect of such hypothetical, which are made use of only for the amplification of matters, and serve for the

applications, have thought it not amiss, in a case of such imminent and extreme danger, to try conclusions by administering this antidote unto it. When God threatens, say they, the righteous man apostatising, that for the iniquity which he committeth he shall die, he speaks neither of the first death, properly so called, nor yet of the second death, but of afflictions, judgments, and calamities, (oft signified in Scripture by the word “death,” as prosperity is by the word

“life,”) which God often brings upon truly good and righteous men, when they greatly provoke him by their sins. To this I answer, 1. That this mist hath been already scattered and dispelled by the strength of that light which shineth in the early part of this chapter; by which it clearly appeareth that by the death threatened by God against a righteous man’s backsliding, and persevering in his backslidings unto death, (which we there show to be the case put by God in the Scripture in hand,) is

meant eternal death; therefore not any temporal judgments or afflictions, at least, not only or principally these. Yet here we add,

2. That it ill becomes an interpreter of Scripture to recede from the plain, proper, and best-known signification of words, save only when necessitated by the exigency either of the context and scope of the place in hand, or else of the nature and condition of the matter, as viz. when the sense which the common signification of the word raiseth and exhibiteth is

consciences of men, for any man to put a qualified or mitigating sense upon the word “death,” especially not being authorised by God himself so to do.

5, and lastly, The authors themselves of this interpretation seem to be half heartless and hopeless of doing any great matters for their cause by it, and in their explication of themselves about it, they distinguish themselves quite besides that, which should relieve them. The word, death, they say, in the prophet, doth not *in the first sense* of it, signify

eternal death, as neither doth the word, life, in the opposite part of the sentence, signify eternal life. But what though the word, death, doth not in the controverted passage, signify eternal death, in the first sense or signification of it, yet if it signifieth it in the second, third, or fourth sense, or if it signifieth it at all, it is of one and the same consideration, for the eviction of what is claimed by us from the place; which is, that a man truly righteous may so degenerate and apostatise, that God will inflict eternal

death upon him. I omit to demand of these interpreters, by what authority or confidence of genius, they undertake thus particularly to range and marshal the several senses, which, they say, God intended in such and such words, giving the pre-eminence to such or such a sense, and saying to another, stand back, or come behind.

If we had mere ignorance or nescience of the truth to encounter, or satisfy, though in conjunction with the greatest parts of judgment and

understanding on the one hand, and with the greatest wanness and scrupulousness of circumspection on the other hand, the traversing of the Scripture already insisted upon, were sufficient, I conceive, without any further labour of arguing, to gain credit and fulness of consent to that truth, which is now upon the advance. But prejudice and partiality are hydropical, and hardly satisfiable: and these are our chief adversaries in the business in hand. Therefore to reconcile, if possible, the

disaffections of these, with the truth, we shall show them more visions from heaven of the same light and truth with the former. And first, upon, this account, we shall remember them of a passage, formerly argued; and gather up, at present, only so much of the substance of the discussion, and that with what brevity may be, as we judge serviceable for our present purpose, referring the reader to a review, if he please, of the larger examination. The tenor of the place is this: "Then his

had for the price only of so much pains, as the perusal of pages 222, 225, of the 8th chapter of this discourse, will require.

Nor doth the reversal of such acts of grace in God as we speak of, argue the least mutability, or shadow of change in him, either in respect of his love, counsels, or decrees; it only argueth a change and alteration in men. For at that very instant, when God loveth a person, and justifieth him, in respect of his faith, he hateth with a perfect hatred, and such which hath death and

contrary acts in reference unto and about one and the same person, remains entirely one and the same, no ways changed, no ways altered, in his affections, or in any thing else relating to him. But of this GREEK already. See Chap 4.

The root or grand occasion of the common mistake in this point, I mean, why men conceive and judge, that if God loves a man at one time, and hates him at another, he must needs be variable in his affection, is that capital error of a personal election, and reprobation; or of such

proposition, I presume, will pass without control. The minor is proved from the place in hand, thus: that which Paul was very solicitous and industrious to prevent, he was in a possibility of suffering, or being made. But Paul was very solicitous and industrious to prevent his being made a castaway, as the Scripture in hand plainly avoucheth; he “kept under his body, and brought it into subjection,” in order to prevent his becoming a castaway. Ergo, he was in danger or possibility of being made a

castaway. The reason of the consequence in the major proposition is, because no man of understanding will be solicitous to prevent or hinder the coming to pass of such a thing, the coming to pass whereof he knows to be impossible.

It is like it will be here said, that the word GREEK, translated, a “ castaway,” doth not always signify a person wholly rejected of God, but sometimes a person reprovabale, in respect of some particular action, omission, or course. I answer,

1. The word GREEK, in the

Scripture amongst all the fathers, by the word GREEK understands a person rejected from salvation by God. “Do not think,” saith Paul,” as this author commenteth on the place, “when once you have believed, that it is sufficient to save you: for if it be not sufficient for me to salvation, to preach, to teach, to bring thousands unto God, unless I be unreprouable also in my personal ways and actions, much less will it be so unto you.””

3. Pareus himself acknowledgeth, that,

besides Chrysostom, Ambrose, Theophylact, and Lyra, interpret the word, and place, accordingly.

4. Our best modern expositors themselves, though for the most part they strain hard to deliver the common doctrine of perseverance out of the hand of the word GREEK, yet, by the tenor of the sentence, and manifest scope of the place, are so amused in their design, that in their expressions they fall into the way of the ancient interpretation mentioned. Calvin, having mentioned the exposition

of some to this effect, “Lest, when I have well and faithfully taught others, I myself, by an evil course of life, should receive the sentence of damnation from God,” doth not at all tax this exposition, but only presents another, which, as he supposeth, doth *melius quadrare*, better suit with the place. And yet, immediately after, acknowledgeth that the sentence may cohere with the former saying, thus, “Lest I be defrauded,” or deprived, “of the Gospel, whereof others, by my means, are made

partakers.” Which sense, with that contended for by us, are no more two, but one interpretation. Musculus is right down for the same sense, upon the place. “The first reason,” saith he, “is, lest he should become a reprobate, *i. e.* lest he should be amongst those who do not run,” or strive, “lawfully, and so never come to obtain the prize.” Mr. John Deodate, as he is Englished upon the place, thus, “A castaway, *i.e.* found unworthy of being approved and rewarded, as one of God’s bold champions. He hath a

to themselves, and their judgments otherwise, and the best modern interpreters, unwillingly, and without sparing themselves in their opinions otherwise, give testimony to such a sense of the word GREEK, and so of the whole period, which clearly asserteth a possibility of a final fall in true believers.

5, and lastly, The scope of the place, from verse 23, evinceth the legitimacy of such a sense in both, above all contradiction. For the apostle, having asserted this for the reason, motive,

that in case of giving it over, he was in no possibility of becoming a reprobate hereby; my answer is, that his argument reacheth neither of these, unless it be in a way of confutation. For as there was a precedaneous possibility, that Christ who did die, might not have died; and again, in case he had not died, that the persons who now believe in him, and are saved, should not have been saved; in like manner, there was a possibility, both that Paul, who did now keep under his body, might not have

unto the end, as we have cause in abundance to judge concerning him, he be saved, So that the argument recoils, as we see, upon the author himself, and the cause which he seeks to maintain by it.

Our English annotators upon the place are very tender of admitting any such sense of the word GREEK, which should imply any uncertainty in the apostle of his election or of obtaining the prize. But the truth is, that that sense of the word, for which we have contested, doth no ways imply the

reprobate, he might have as much certainty of obtaining the prize, as he desired, or was any ways meet or reasonable for him, either to desire or enjoy. This certainty he might have, and questionless had, upon his continuance in well doing: and for any man to be certain of obtaining the prize, though he should apostatise and decline into ways of wickedness, is not a certainty either meet for God to give, or for any man to receive. Somewhat more was said upon this account in the ninth chapter.

The next passage we shall

that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them, by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned,” Heb.

6:4—8. Answerable hereunto is another in the same epistle: “For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He

that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace?" Heb. 10:26—29. Evident it is, that in these two passages the Holy Ghost, after a most serious manner, and with a very pathetic and moving strain of speech and discourse,

scarce the like to be found in all the Scriptures, admonisheth those, who are at present true believers, to take heed of relapsing into the ways of their former ignorance and impiety. This caveat or admonition he vehemently presseth by an argument of this import; that in case they shall thus relapse, there will be very little, or no hope at all of their recovery, or return to the estate of faith and grace wherein they now stand. Before the faces of such sayings and passages as these, rightly understood,

hypothetical sign or conditional particle to be found in either of them, as they come from the Holy Ghost, and are carried in the original. Those two “ifs,” appearing in the English translation, the one in the former place, the other in the latter, show, it may be, the translators inclination to the cause, but not their faithfulness in their engagement; an infirmity whereunto they were very subject, as we shall have occasion to take notice of the second time ere long in another instance of like partiality:

by such characters and signal excellences which the Scriptures are wont to appropriate unto saints and true believers, and that when they intend to show them in the best and greatest of their glory. What we say herein will, I suppose, be made above all gainsaying by instancing particulars.

1. The persons spoken of are, in the former of the passages, said to be GREEK, *i. e.* “enlightened,” meaning, with the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ in the gospel. How frequently is this

grace of illumination or enlightening attributed unto the saints or true believers? The apostle having said that “the god of this world had blinded the eyes of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ . . . should shine unto them,” he adds soon after, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts,” GREEK, “to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God,” &c., 2 Cor. 4:6: so that true believers are here distinguished from

unbelievers by this, that they are “enlightened the others having their eyes “blinded,” by reason whereof they are without any such illumination. So again, where he saith to these Hebrews, “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened,” GREEK, “ye endured a great fight of afflictions,” Heb. 10:32, he clearly termeth their conversion itself to the faith, the illumination or enlightening: yea, this illumination is so appropriate unto the saints or sound believers, that our

Saviour himself styles the generation of them GREEK, “children of light,” Luke 16:8. So the apostle Paul admonisheth the Ephesians to walk, GREEK, “as children, of the light,” Eph. 5:8; meaning, as saints or true believers; and in the same verse he distinguisheth their present estate in faith from their former in unbelief thus, “For ye were sometimes darkness; but now are ye light in the Lord.”

2. In the latter of the said passages, the persons spoken of are said to have “received” GREEK, *i.e.* “the

acknowledgment of the truth;" which expression doth not signify the bare notion or apprehension of what the gospel teacheth and holdeth forth, of which they are capable who are the most professed enemies thereof, but such a consenting and subjection hereunto which worketh effectually in men to a separating of themselves from sin and sinners. This is the constant acception and import of the phrase in the Scriptures. "Always learning," saith the apostle, 'of silly women, laden with sins,' "and never able to

come,” GREEK, “to an acknowledgment of the truth,” 2 Tim. 3:7; *i. e.* to a thorough and cordial assent to it, which is wont to utter itself in a suitable conversation. So when he saith that “God will have all men to be saved and to come,” GREEK, “to the knowledge,” or acknowledgment, rather, “of the truth,” 1 Tim. 2:4, by “coming to the acknowledgment of the truth,” he cannot mean any thing ineffectual or unavailable to salvation; such a sense would render the sentence senseless, and

exhibit it in this form, “God will have all men to be saved, and come to” that which is not able to save them. Therefore, by “the acknowledgment of the truth,” is meant such a cordial and thorough assent to it which consists in a sound and saving faith. So when he saith that “the servant of the Lord must be gentle in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance,” GREEK, “to”, or for, “the acknowledgment of the truth,” he clearly supposeth

“the acknowledgment of the truth” to be either the end or special perfection of repentance, *i. e.* such a thing which demonstrates repentance to be sound and of the saving kind, wherever it is found. There is but one place more where the phrase is used, and here also it bears as high a sense as in the testimonies already opened: “Paul a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgement of the truth which is after godliness,” Titus 1:1. By the

"acknowledgment of the truth," cannot any such knowledge of it be meant, in this place, which should stand with unregeneracy or unbelief, because then Paul should style himself "an apostle of Jesus Christ according to" the exigency or requirement of such a "knowledge" of the gospel in men which is insufficient to save them—a sense ridiculous and preposterous. Somewhat was done by us in the preceding chapter towards the unfolding of this place: yea, the word GREEK, "acknowledgment," in

construction with other words of like import, as the "acknowledgment of Christ," Eph. 1:17; "of the sons of God," Eph. 4:13 ; "of God," Col. 1:10; "of the mystery of God," Col. 2:2; "of him that hath called us," 2 Pet. 1:3, to omit many the like, still importeth such a knowledge which accompanieth a sound and saving faith.

3. The persons queried about, are said to be "sanctified with" or by "the blood of the covenant," i. e. by their being sprinkled herewith to be separated from such who refuse this

demonstratively evinced that the Scripture in hand speaks of none other but a true and real sanctification, Chap, 8., and such which is appropriate unto saints.

4. They are said to “taste,” or to have “tasted, of the heavenly gift.” By this heavenly gift may be meant either, 1. Christ himself, who is called “the gift of God,” John 4:10; or, 2. The Holy Ghost, who is said to be “given to them that believe,” Acts 11:17; and again, to them “who obey God,” Acts 5:32; or, 3. The gift of righteousness or justification, for this also is

“Tasting the heavenly gift,” in any diminutive or extenuating sense, is to break the heart, as it were, to dissipate the strength and power of the apostle’s arguing in this place. And besides, the very word itself, to “taste,” ordinarily in Scripture, imports a real communion with, or participation and enjoyment, if the thing be good, of that which is said to be tasted. “O *taste* and see,” saith David, “that the Lord is good,” Psa. 34:8. His intent, doubtless, was not to invite men to a slight or superficial taste of the

&c. Sometimes, I acknowledge, the word GREEK, to taste, signifies only a slender perception of the quality or taste of a thing; but this is only or chiefly when the relish or taste of a thing is desired to be known; as John 2:9; Matt, 27:34; which cannot be affirmed in the Scripture in hand. And, besides, according to the sense of our adversaries in the present debate, if the taste of the heavenly gift we speak of should imply no more, but only a faint or weak perception of the sweetness and glorious

partaker of Christ, signifies a saving communion with, him by faith, Heb. 3:1; and so, communion or partnership with God, 1 John 1:2,6, imports an estate of salvation, at least;) it usually signifies more, viz. some additional and richer communion with him by way of obsequation, or earnest; *i. e.* such a communion with him, by which true believers become mightily strengthened in their inner man, and filled with confidence of receiving the great inheritance of heaven in due time. Upon this

account the apostle prays, on the behalf of the Corinthians, whom he supposeth all along to have been true believers, that GREEK, “the communion of the Holy Ghost might he with them;” 2 Cor. 13:13; meaning, some richer and greater presence of his than yet they had found with them. And if we mind the course of the Scriptures they will inform us that the Holy Ghost was not wont to be given unto men, (and, consequently, they could not be partakers of him,) but upon and after their believing. See to this

fellowship with Satan, and were partakers of his spirit. Communion with, or partaking of the Holy Ghost, is, as hath been shown in Scripture dialect, appropriated only to true believers. And whereas Christ will say to them, GREEK, “I never knew you,” *i. e.* approved you or liked your ways, the computation of the time of his dislike of them is here intimated to begin, when they began to work iniquity, and more particularly, when they entered upon the profession of his name,

great reward,” Psalm 19:11; the law of God is a great benefactress to those who observe it. Now then, this tasting the goodness of the word of God, the Scripture clearly appropriateth unto the saints. “Are not my words *good*?” or, do not my words good, as our last translation readeth, “unto him that walketh uprightly?” Micah 2:7; implying that they are not so to wicked men. “The law of thy mouth,” saith David in his holy applications unto God, “is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver,” Psalm 119:72;

“unto me,”— tacitly implying, that other men, of a different spirit from him, do not taste any such sweetness or goodness in them. And the apostle Paul puts the point in question, out of question, in that decision of his: “ To the one,” meaning to unbelieving and wicked men, “ we are the savour of death unto death: and to the other,” *i. e.* to those who truly believe, “ the savour of life unto life,” 2 Cor. 2:16. So that hypocrites and unbelievers are incapable, whilst such, of tasting the “good word of God,” *i. e.*

believers.

7, and lastly, The persons we speak of, are yet further said to have tasted GREEK, “the powers of the world to come,” *i. e.* not the powers of miracles, as Pareus interprets, there is a manifest incongruity in such an interpretation, which we leave to the reader to conceive; but either the joys of heaven, as our English annotators, or the might and glorious things of immortality, which is the more general interpretation; or rather, as Cameron expoundeth, the incarnation, humiliation,

sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, &c. of the Son of God; which may therefore be termed, GREEK, “the powers of the world to come,” either because they are, in respect of their full notification unto men, appropriate to the times of the gospel, wherein the great change and new state of spiritual affairs, in comparison of what they were under the law, may well be termed, “the world to come,” as Pareus and others understand the expression, both here and elsewhere in the same epistle, and with

writing only unto those whom he judged true and sound believers (as appears from several places in the epistle, as chap. 3:14; 6:9, &c.) should in the most serious, emphatical, and weighty passages hereof, admonish them of such evils or dangers which only concerned other men, and whereunto themselves were not at all obnoxious: yea, and whereunto if they had been obnoxious, all the cautions, admonitions, warnings, threatenings in the world would not, according to their principles with whom we

wrought from it. Pareus, from Nazianzen, mentioneth six several significations of the word impossible, and preferreth two of them with equal approbation to the apostle's service in this place. Neither of them imports that rigid or district impossibility we speak of: but the one, such an impossibility which is caused through, want of strength in him that should perform a thing; the other, such which exceedeth the course of nature and efficiency of second causes. So that he supposeth a

liberty or power remaining in God to renew again by repentance the persons here spoken of, after their falling away, notwithstanding that impossibility which is here asserted of their recovery. Which interpretation of his I willingly subscribe unto, and could plead the cause of such a subscription if it were pertinent to the process of the business in hand.

That which is commonly alleged in opposition to what hath been argued concerning the two last Scriptures, is of little

consideration, excepting only those Scriptures and arguments by which the doctrine of perseverance in the general is wont to be maintained, both which we have answered at large in the two next preceding chapters. To say with Pareus, that “The apostasy and event prove the persons spoken of to have been hypocrites,” is to cause a man’s opinion to rise up early to praise itself. His refuge of an hypothetical form in the words is but a sanctuary built in the air, as we showed formerly. There is

to show and prove.

The next Scripture testimony we shall produce, and briefly urge in the cause under maintenance, is in the same epistle with the former, and speaketh these words: “Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him, Heb. 10:38. Our English translators, out of good will doubtless to a bad cause, have almost defaced this testimony, by substituting any man for the just man. For whereas they translate, “but if any man draw back,”

the original readeth,
GREEK, *i. e.* and if (or, but
if) *he* (*i. e.* the just man,
who should live by his faith,
viz. if he continues in it,)
shall draw hack. Beza
himself likewise before
them, had stained the
honour of his faithfulness
with the same blot in his
translation. But the mind of
the Holy Ghost in the
words is plain, and without
parable, viz. that if the just
man, who lives (*i. e.* who at
present enjoys the favour of
God, and thereby is
supported in all his trials,)
and should live always by
his faith (if he continues in

it, as Pareus well glosseth) shall draw back, or shall be withdrawn (viz. through fear or sloth, as the word properly signifieth, see Acts 20:27,) from his believing, “my soul shall have no pleasure in him,” *i. e.* according to the import of the Hebraism, my soul shall hate or abhor him to the death ; as it is also expounded in the words immediately following, “But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but, &c. From hence then evident it is, that such a man who is just or righteous man, and

admonishing or cautioning men against such evils, which there is no possibility for them to fall into, yea, and this known unto themselves? Therefore this testimony, for confirmation of the doctrine we maintain, is like “a king upon his throne, against whom there is no rising up.”

The same doctrine is clearly taught and asserted by our Saviour himself in the parable of the sower. But he, saith he, “that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon

saving their souls: these, saith he, were signified by the good ground, spoken of in the parable. Others of them, would hear without reaping any such benefit thereby; and this partly by not setting their minds at all upon what they should hear, who were resembled to the high way: partly by a neglect to ground and establish themselves thoroughly in the truth and goodness of the gospel, after their hearing and embracing of it; these, saith he, were shadowed by the stony ground; partly also, by suffering the cares and

lusts of the world to overgrow the sproutings or puttings forth of the gospel in their hearts and souls, by means whereof they came, after a while, to wither, and die quite away: and these, saith he, were pointed at by the thorny ground. Now those signified by the stony ground, he expressly calleth GREEK, *i. e.* persons who continue for a time, or a season, *i. e.*, as Luke explaineth, GREEK, who believe for a season, Luke 8:13. So that those, who only for a time believe, and afterward make defection from Christ, and

the other. For this is the nature or condition of a stony, or rocky soil, which hath but a thin coat or covering of mould, or earth upon it; viz. to exhibit a speedy and sudden spring, or blade, from the seed that is sown in it, but not to afford this blade, or seed, any such rooting, which is sufficient to preserve it from scorching, when the sun beats violently and for any considerable space of time together, with his fiery beams upon it. But as the blade which springs from one and the same kind of seed, as suppose from

differing from that which is true and truly justifying, they devise a new kind of faith which the Scriptures know not of; and of how dangerous a consequence the introducing of an exotic faith into the affairs of Christian religion may be, I leave to themselves to judge. For those hearers or professors, which in Matthew's relation of the parable our Saviours calls GREEK, temporaries, are explained by Luke to be such, GREEK, who *believe* for a season, as we heard before. Now the ordinary and most familiar

signification of the word, GREEK, to believe, in such cases and construction as this, I mean, when it is used indefinitely, and without a specification of some particular object, is to signify, true believers, or such who believe unto justification. Instances hereof axe too many to be numbered. And to turn words out of their native, proper, and best-known significations, into unusual, by, and improper senses, no exigency of the context compelling hereunto, hath always been adjudged a dangerous breach of the

laws of Scripture interpretation.

2. The temporariness of the faith found in the stony ground, did not arise from the nature, essence, or any internal property in this faith, wherein it was specifically distinguished from the faith of those emparabled by the good ground, but partly from the ill temper or inconsiderateness of the persons, in whom it was seated, who neglected to give it sufficient rooting or establishment within them; partly from the outward occasions of trouble and

faith, but only a consequent of it, and that contingent , appears, 1. From the principles of our adversaries themselves, who commonly distinguish between the gift of faith, and the gift of perseverance. “Wonderful it is,” saith Austin, “and much to be wondered at, that God should, unto some of his children whom he hath regenerated in Christ, to whom he hath given *faith*, hope, and love, *not give perseverance*.” Therefore, by the way, Austin is no friend to the common doctrine of

opposed or
contradistinguished to that
which is temporary, but
may commodiously enough
be distinguished into that
which endureth for a
season, and that which
continueth for ever.
Therefore, that which is
temporary and which
standeth by a man only for
a short time, may he as real
and true in the same kind,
as that which continueth
with him all his days. 4. If
the faith under dispute
were temporary in the
nature of it, and not by
consequence only, then
could not a falling away

“and as soon as it was sprung up,” *i. e.* within a short time after, as appears Mark 4:17, “it withered away, because it lacked moisture,” Luke 8:6. So that the withering of it away, *i. e.* the temporariness of it, was occasioned or caused by a means accidental and extrinsical to it, viz., the want of a thoroughness or cordialness of affection to the gospel, by which the faith or belief of it now sprung in the soul, should have been fed, nourished, and maintained against all attempts made by

root, no sufficient rooting to carry it through unto the harvest; or, no root comparatively, viz., in respect of the faith of the good ground. The seed that is sown in stony ground, though it wants depth of earth, and so must needs want depth of rooting, yet it hath some kind of rooting proportionable to the earth which it hath, as well as that which is sown in the best and fruitfullest soil that is. So that as a sprout or blade of wheat sown in stony ground doth not differ specifically from a blade of the same grain

growing in good ground, though this hath, by the opportunity of the soil, the better rooting: in like manner the faith of him that believeth only for a time, and afterwards declineth, may be essentially and for nature, the same faith with his who persevereth unto the end. If difference in rooting should cause or prove a specifical difference between blade and blade of the same grain, it is like that every blade, though growing in the same field, or ground, would differ specie from all its fellows; inasmuch as it is

faith, from a gradual difference in their rootings. If it be yet further objected, The faith of the stony ground yielded no fruit; whereas the faith of the good ground is said to bring forth fruit with patience. Doth not this argue a specifical difference between them? I answer, Neither: yea, those very words, with patience, which are distinguishing, clearly imply, that the faith of the stony ground did bring forth fruit also; and that it came short of the good ground only in this, that this brought forth fruit

with patience, (*i. e.* the fruitfulness of it was not extinguished by any persecutions or sufferings from the world,) whereas the fruitfulness of the other gave up the ghost through fear of sufferings. And indeed had not this stony ground been some ways fruitful, and made such a profession of the gospel which rendereth men obnoxious to persecution from the world, there had been no cause why it should either have suffered or feared persecution. Besides, fruitfulness and unfruitfulness make no

specificall or essential
difference between subject
and subject, more than
strength and weakness,
speech and silence argue
one man to differ specie
from another. If they did,
the same tree that beareth
fruit one year and is barren
another should differ
specie from itself; yea, and
the faith of true believers
themselves, who, according
to the known sense of our
adversaries themselves,
may go astray like lost
sheep, and live for a long
time together in ways of the
greatest unworthiness,
without repentance, all

which time their faith must needs be unfruitful, should come in time to differ specie from itself.

The last objection, which I think knows how to appear against the truth of the faith of the stony ground or temporaries in the parable, is this: True faith, such as was found in those resembled by the good ground, always includes a purpose of heart to bear the cross of Christ, and suffer persecution: But the faith of the temporaries wanted this property; Therefore it was not true faith, but another kind of

faith essentially distinct from it. To this also we answer,

1. That true faith doth not in the precise or formal conception of it include such a purpose of heart as the objection speaks of; nor can such a thing be proved, either from the Scriptures or from any sound principle of reason. That such a purpose is seminally or virtually included in true faith, may be granted. But,

2. That such a purpose of heart was not in those that are called temporaries in the parable, cannot be proved: there is no word or

clause herein that doth import it. That they did not take up the cross of Christ when it lay in their way, nor endure persecution for the gospel, doth not at all prove that there was no real purpose in them of doing either. The apostle Paul said of himself: “To will, (i.e. to purpose or intend) is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not,” Rom. 7:18. 3, and lastly, Evident it is from other Scriptures, and in part from the parable itself in hand, that such believers who proved temporaries did yet endure

in the soul. Nor doth our Saviour any ways blame or reprove it but upon this account only. Yea, in blaming it upon this account only, and reproving those who had it for being no more diligent and careful in the use of means for con- fining and establishing themselves better in it, he plainly gives testimony unto it in point of truth and soundness; inasmuch as no man deserveth blame for not consulting or endeavouring the perpetuation of an hypocritical faith in his soul, or such, which though

not of any good accord with their own principles otherwise. Concerning “those helps or assistances of grace,” say our English divines present in the Synod of Dort, “which are afforded by God unto men, we are to judge of them,” (meaning in point of sufficiency or efficaciousness) “by the nature of the benefit offered,” (as attainable by them) “and by the most manifest word of God, *not by the event* or abuse of them.” The last proof from the Scriptures, which we shall, at present, insist

her wallowing in the mire,”
2 Pet. 2:18, &c. The possibility of a total and final defection in true believers lieth as large and full in these quarters as truth lightly can be lodged in words ; the Holy Ghost here plainly supposing that which is clearly consistent with, yea, and equivalent thereunto, viz. that they who by the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ, have clean (or truly or really, GREEK) escaped the pollutions of the world, being again entangled therewith, may be overcome, so as that their

escaped from those who live in error, who have escaped the pollutions of the world through the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ, to have known the way of righteousness,” &c. do not suppose the persons spoken of to have had true faith; nor import any thing but what may very possibly be found in hypocrites. But with how little truth, yea, or semblance of truth, these things are asserted, hath been already exposed to open view, when we traversed the Scripture in hand upon another occasion. (Chap. 8. pp. 215,

live holily and blamelessly in this present world, and this by means of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, may be hypocrites and children of perdition; and they, on the other hand, who are companions with thieves, murderers, adulterers, &c., saints and sound believers, I leave to men, whose judgments are not turned upside down with prejudice, to determine.

2. The persons here spoken of, are said to have GREEK, truly or really escaped from those who live in error. Doubtless an hypocrite

more than a fish that is already in the net, or fast upon the hook, can be said to be allured or deceived by a bait held to her.

4. Hypocrites are no where said, neither can they with any congruity to Scripture phrase be said, to “have escaped the pollutions of the world” through the acknowledgment (for so the word GREEK should be translated) of Jesus Christ, the acknowledgment of the truth, and so of Christ and of God, constantly in the Scriptures importing a sound and saving work of conversion, as we lately

observed in this chapter.

5. and lastly, The persons to whom the apostle addresseth himself in this epistle, being looked upon by him as true believers, yea, as “ partakers of like precious faith ” with himself and the rest of the apostles, 2 Pet. 1:3, it cannot reasonably be imagined that in so short an epistle he should hang so long, as the whole second chapter amounteth unto, upon a subject or discourse which little or nothing concerned them to whom he writes, nor much indeed any other man, if

care, diligence,
faithfulness, cannot deliver
me? Therefore,

questionless, the apostle
Peter all along that quarter
of discourse, which we have
lately had under
consideration, clearly
supposeth that even true
believers, such as upon
good grounds he concluded
those to whom he writes to
be, are obnoxious to such
an apostasy and declining,
in, and from their faith,
which is accompanied with
the signal ruin and
destruction of those, who
value holiness and close
walkings with God at no

whereby they may be strengthened to persevere unto the end. But of these, at least of some of the most pregnant of them, we shall have occasion to consider in the chapter following, where we shall further plead the cause of the said doctrine by force of argument and demonstration.

CHAPTER 13.

Grounds of reason from the Scriptures, evincing a possibility of such a

defection even in true believers, which is accompanied with destruction in the end.

THE opportunity which error commonly findeth to build herself a throne amongst men, and to reign over the judgments and consciences of those who are debtors of homage and subjection to the truth, lieth not so much in the strength or beauty of those arguments or pleas which she is able to engage in her cause, as either in the weakness or negligence of

the friends and professors of the truth; as when they are either not able, or not industrious enough, to show her unto the world, like “Solomon in all his glory, and to spread that light of evidence and conviction round about her which belongeth unto her, and which would commend her like a daughter of God in the eyes of men. Truth, whose native residence and seat is, as the old philosophers were wont to express it, in profundo, in the depths, remote from the common thoughts and apprehensions of men,

cannot in many particulars be drawn up into a clear and perfect light, but only by a long cord, well twisted, of much labour, attentive meditation, together with some dexterity for the work. God himself is said to “inhabit a light that is inaccessible, 1 Tim. 6:16; that is, as I conceive, to be capable of more and more glorious attributions, or of having a greater number of excellent thing's, and things of a greater excellency, spoken of him, and that with evidence and clearness of truth, than either men or angels are

able to discover or comprehend, much more to utter or declare unto the world. And the truth is that many truths dwell in such a light which is not accessible without much difficulty to the judgments and understandings of men, being only manifestable in their certainty and perfect beauty, by such arguments and considerations which they must dig deep who desire to discover; and they look narrowly and with a single eye who desire to be made fully capable and sensible of them, being set before them. Whereas

such considerations which exhibit it like itself unto them, they would then soon confess to be a doctrine which was set, not at all to curse, but to bless them altogether.

The sole undertaking of this chapter is to commend the said doctrine unto the judgments and consciences of men for a truth, by a proposal of such worthy things which relate to it, either by way of causality or affinity in truth. In the first place, I plead the cordial sympathy it hath with that righteousness of God which the Scripture calls GREEK,

or a non-acceptation of persons, thus:

That doctrine which rendereth God free from that unrighteousness which the Scripture calls a respecting the persons of men, is a doctrine of perfect consistency with the Scriptures and the truth.

The doctrine which teacheth a possibility of the saints declining, and this unto death, is a doctrine of this import. Ergo.

The reason of the former proposition is plain, inasmuch as the Scriptures frequently assert that principle of non-respecting

persons, most worthy “ the Judge of all the earth,” unto God, Deut. 10:17 ; Gal. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:17, &c. The latter proposition needeth no laboriousness of proof neither. Evident it is that the doctrine here spoken of, representeth God as a non-respecter of persons, inasmuch as it rendereth him a Judge of the same righteous severity against the enormous transgressions of his own children and friends which he exerciseth towards his enemies, and those that are strangers unto him, upon the like provocations. This

doctrine subjected saints as well as others to this righteous law of God: “Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God,” 1 Cor. 6:9; meaning, as is evident from other Scriptures, without repentance. Whereas the common doctrine of perseverance exempteth all such who have at any time been true believers, or children of

considerable ends of the ministry of the gospel, about the effecting whereof it is mainly conversant. Therefore if God, who hath ordained the ministry of the gospel for the advancement of this end, should assert any such doctrine, which rendereth it unnecessary and impertinent, in reference to this end, he should be divided in himself, and pull down with one hand what he buildeth up with another.

The minor proposition is demonstrable, thus: That doctrine which rendereth

the labour and faithfulness of a minister in pressing such exhortations, threatenings, and promises, which tend to the preservation of the saints in faith and holiness unto the end, useless, rendereth the ministry of the gospel, as far as it concerns the encouragement or enabling of the saints to persevere, needless and vain: But guilty of such a tendency as this, is the commonly received doctrine of perseverance: Ergo.

The truth of the major proposition here, shineth clearly enough with its own

light: or, however, there is this reason for it, viz. because ministers of the gospel can have little else from the Scriptures, but only exhortations, threatenings, and promises, whereby to build or effect the perseverance of the saints. Therefore if the pressing, or putting on of these upon men, be needless, in reference to such an end, certainly their ministry, as far as it relates to this end, is needless also. The minor is thus proved: The common doctrine of perseverance requireth and commandeth all saints, or

die: But that doctrine which requireth and commandeth all this, and much more of like import, to be confidently believed by true believers, rendereth the pressing of all exhortations, threatenings, promises upon them, in order to prevail with them, or to make them careful to persevere, bootless and unnecessary: Ergo.

The major, in this syllogism, is the known voice of the common doctrine of perseverance. The reason of the minor is, because a certain knowledge and persuasion

peremptorily-decreed
perseverance, with an
usefulness or necessity of
the exhortations,
threatenings, and promises
mentioned, hath neither
any logical nor theological
virtue in it for such a
purpose. For, is it any other
than this, viz. that the
exhortations,
comminations, and
promises which we speak
of, are means appointed by
God, and used by him
accordingly, for the
accomplishment and
effecting of that
perseverance in the saints,
which he hath made simply

and absolutely necessary by his decree ? Now that such a notion as this is altogether irrelative to the business, the accommodation whereof it pretendeth, will be made evident, by weighing the particulars severally.

First, That the exhortations, wherein the saints are exhorted unto perseverance, are no means by which the promises of perseverance, made, as our adversaries suppose, unto them, are accomplished or effected, is thus clearly evinced: Whatsoever is a means for the bringing of

speake of, he thus draweth them, either by such a force or power immediately acted upon their wills, by which they are made willing to obey them, or else he maketh use of the said exhortations so to work, or affect their wills, that they become willing accordingly. If the former be asserted, then,

2.1. The said exhortations are no means whereby the perseverance of the saints is effected, but God alone, and immediately, by his Spirit; For if the will be immediately affected by God after such a manner,

or brought to such a bent and inclination, as that it cannot but obey the said exhortations, i. e. do the things which the said exhortations require, then would it have done the same things, whether there had been any such exhortations in being, or no; and consequently, these exhortations could have no manner of efficiency about their perseverance. For the will, according to the common saying, is, of itself, *caeca potentia*, “a blind faculty,” and follows its own predominant bent and inclination, without taking

or without the instrumental interposure of the said exhortations.

Secondly, Neither can the latter of the said consequences stand. God doth not make use of the said exhortations to influence or affect the wills of the saints upon any such terms, as hereby to make them infallibly, infrustrably, necessitatingly willing to persevere, or to do the things upon which perseverance dependeth. For,

1. If so, then one and the same act of the will, should

of producing natural, physical, or necessary effects. Now then, if it be impossible that one and the same act of the will should be both physical and moral, that is, necessary and not necessary, impossible also it is, that it should be produced by the irresistible working of God, and by exhortations, in a joint efficiency.

It may be objected, They who hold, or grant such an influence, or operation of the Spirit of God upon the will, which is frustrable and resistible, do, or must suppose it to be, a physical

action, as well as that which is irresistible. If so, then the act of the will, so far as it is raised by means of this action, or operation of God, must, according to the tenor of the former argument, be physical also; and so the pretended impossibility is no more avoided by this opinion than by the other. I answer,

Though such an operation of God upon the will, as is here mentioned, be, in respect of God, and of the manner of its proceeding from him, physical, yet in respect of the nature and substance of it, it is

a persuading of men hereunto; it only followeth that the minister doth co-operate with God, (which the apostle himself affirmeth, 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1,) in order to one and the same effect, *i. e.* that he operateth by one and the same kind of efficiency with God, viz. morally, or persuadingly, not necessitatingly. For when one necessitates, and another only persuades, they cannot be said to co-operate, or to work the one with the other; no more than two, when the one runs, and the other walks a

or wherewith he so inclineth, or at least attempteth to incline it. Thus far and in this sense it is granted, That the act of God, whereby he inclines or moves the wills of men, either to believe or to persevere believing, is irresistible or infrustrable, *i. e.* men cannot hinder or prevent those moving impressions unto good, in one kind or other, which God is pleased at any time to impart unto them or to act upon their wills, though they may hinder and prevent the further and full prevailing of them to that

cannot be safe, undeniably prove the said promise to have been not absolute, but conditional. For in case God should have promised absolutely, and without all exception or condition, that they should have been safe, Paul had plainly contradicted the truth of it, by affirming, not that they should not, but that they could not be safe, otherwise than upon condition of the mariners' abiding in the ship.

4. The apostle exhorts those in the ship, after long abstinence, and weakness thereby, to take meat, and

that upon this reason or motive; GREEK i.e for this is for your preservation or safety. Which plainly shows, that notwithstanding the promise made unto Paul, that there should not a hair of any of them fall to the ground, they yet might have perished by over long fasting. Therefore the said promise was not absolute.

5. When by receiving sustenance they had recruited their spirits and recovered strength, by the apostle's direction, as is most probable, they lightened the ship and cast

discourse it appears how and upon what terms those words of Paul, verse 31, “Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be safe,” accord with the promise of God made unto him concerning the safety of all that were in the ship with him. The purport of the promise was this, that the ship being wrecked and broken, they should all escape with their lives, because God had given them unto Paul, i. e. had purposed to honour Paul by sparing or preserving them in so imminent a danger. This promise was fulfilled

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,” 1 Cor. 10:12, 13. So again, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure,” Philip. 2:12, 13. So the apostle having admonished the Hebrews to

crime specified, who affirm the conjunction mentioned to be found in the said Scriptures, than they who deny the legitimacy of such a conjunction. The incongruity of the conjunction hath been sufficiently evinced: but that any such conjunction is to be found, either in the Scriptures cited, or in any others, is no man's vision but his who hath darkness for a vision. For,

2. That in none of the places cited, is there any promise of perseverance is evident to him that shall duly consider the tenor and

taking used in this kind, be such a thing which they may possibly omit, evident it is, that there is a possibility of their non-persevering. Again,

2. It is one thing to affirm, that God worketh in men, as to will, so to do, (i. e. to enable men to do, or put in execution what they first will, or to assist them in the doing or execution itself,) another, to promise, or work, infallibly and without all possibility of frustration by men, perseverance. There is little or no affinity between these: but how, and in what sense, God is

said to be GREEK, working in men, both to will and to do of his good pleasure, we shall have occasion, God willing, to open more at large in the latter part of this work.

3, and lastly, It is one thing to promise perseverance, another to hope or to persuade ourselves that such or such of our Christian friends will not fall into those horrid sins, from which it is very hard, and next to an impossibility, for them to be renewed by repentance. But such arguments and proofs from the Scriptures

that unless the saints shall GREEK, quit themselves like men, in comporting with the grace of God exhibited unto them in order to their perseverance, the great evil of apostasy will be their ruin.

And thus we have abundantly evicted the truth of this position, that the received doctrine of perseverance absolutely overthrows all the usefulness, necessity, and rational congruity of such admonitions and exhortations unto perseverance, wherein the Holy Ghost addresseth

and vain, in respect of any efficiency contributable by them towards, the effecting of perseverance in the saints. This I demonstrate by the light of this argument:

If the principles of the doctrine we speak of dissolve the efficiency of the said threatenings, towards the end for the accomplishing whereof they are given, then they render them unsavoury, useless, and vain: But the principles of this doctrine are guilty of this offence: Ergo.

The terms of the major

proposition are sufficient witnesses of the truth thereof. In order to the proof of the minor, we suppose, 1. That which is evident enough, viz. that the end intended by God, in such threatenings which threaten those that shall apostatise with eternal death, is to prevent apostasy in the saints, and to work, or cause them to persevere. 2. That this is one of the principles of the common doctrine of perseverance; God hath absolutely promised final perseverance unto the saints: and this another;

fear or apprehension in the saints of eternal death; it being the native property of fear, mixed with hope, to awaken and provoke men to the use of such means, which are proper to prevent the danger, or evil feared. There is no other way imaginable how, or wherein the threatenings we speak of, should operate towards the perseverance of the saints, or the prevention of their apostasy, but that mentioned, viz. by working in them a fear or dread of the evil threatened. Therefore, 2. Evident it is,

all fear of eternal death, and, consequently, are apparently obstructive of, and destructive unto, the native tendency and operativeness of the said threatenings, towards and about the perseverance of the saints. These threatenings can do nothing, contribute nothing, towards the perseverance of the saints, but by the mediation of the fear of evil in them, upon their non-persevering. Therefore, whatsoever hardens them from this fear, or renders them incapable of it, supersedes

threatened is as natural and genuine a fruit of faith as love itself, yea, and of very choice acceptance with God. “By faith,” saith the apostle, “Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, *moved with fear*, prepared an ark for the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Heb. 11:7. So that men may “condemn the world,” and save themselves and others, as well by actions done out of a principle of fear as of love. “Because thine heart

and found peace and safety for both. Yea,
3, and lastly, The present state and frame of the hearts and souls of the saints, duly considered, which are made up as well of flesh and corruption as of spirit and grace, the former haying need of bridles for restraint, as well as the latter of spurs for quickening; evident it is, that arguments or motives drawn from fear of punishment are as necessary and proper for them in respect of the one, as incitements from love in respect of the other. “A

saints themselves can say either that his heart is clean, or his love perfect? “Perfect love casteth out” flesh as well as fear; yea, true love, until flesh be “cast out,” preserveth fear for its assistant and fellow helper. The flesh would soon make love a wanton, and entice her unto folly, did not fear dissolve the enchantment, and protect her chastity. But enough of this.

Notwithstanding, if it be yet further demanded, But doth it not argue servility in men to be drawn by the iron cord of the fear of hell

unworthy of them to suffer themselves to be persuaded and wrought upon accordingly. Nay, doubtless, if the Lord Christ commands or requires of us to “fear him who, when he hath killed, is able to cast both body and soul into hell,” and that upon this very account, as we lately interpreted the place, we shall not be found obedient children unto him unless we do fear accordingly.

2. There is a very different consideration of the obedience of children to their natural parents, and

in the raising or procurement of it, unless withal all the exhibition and performance of it be burdensome, grievous, and offensive unto those who do perform it. For men may act as willingly, as freely, as cheerfully, as contentedly, out of a principle of hope, yea, and of fear itself also, as from love itself; yea, and more willingly and freely, from the two former, than from the latter, unless the principle of love be advanced to a very considerable degree, height, and power in men. There is no reason but to

judge that Noah went about
the mating of his ark, and
continued in the work until
the finishing of it, with as
much willingness,
cheerfulness, and
contentment of mind, as he
performed any other act of
obedience unto God, at any
time, notwithstanding, as
the Scripture informs us, he
was moved thereunto
through fear. Heb. 11:7. Nor
is it credible but that Paul
followed the work of
mortification, keeping
under his body, and bring it
into subjection, with all
willingness, freeness,
cheerfulness, and

contentment, though he was engaged and provoked hereunto by a “fear, lest by any means when he had preached the gospel unto others, he himself should prove a castaway,” 1 Cor. 9:27, or reprobate.

If that of the apostle John be objected, fear hath torment,” 1 John 4:18, and a demand made upon it, how can a man act willingly, or freely, out of such a principle, which hath pain, or torment, in it? I answer,

That fear, of which John speaketh, and which he saith hath pain, or torment

faith, as fear. “ By faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark,” &c. Heb. 11:7. “By faith Noah prepared, &c.”

i.e. out of a settled persuasion and belief that God would preserve him and his from perishing in the waters, by means of the ark, which he had directed him to make for that purpose, he readily and cheerfully betook himself to the framing and making of it. In like manner, Paul, though he “ kept under his body, and brought it into subjection, lest,” (*i. e.*

nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom. 8:35, 38, 39. So that that fear and trembling, with, and out of which, the children of God not only lawfully may, but of duty ought, “to work out their own salvation,” Phil. 2:13, or, which is the same, deliverance from condemnation, are not of those kinds, of fear and trembling, which have

their final perseverance.

Thirdly, and lastly, as this doctrine evacuateth all the exhortations, and comminations, which the Scripture holdeth forth as means to preserve the saints in faith and holiness unto the end, so doth it all the promises also, which are here given in order to the procurement of the same end: the virtue, efficacy, and power whereof are merely nullified by such a supposition as this, that believers stand bound to believe an absolute impossibility of their final

I mean their perseverance. For whatsoever nullifieth the means, is clearly destructive unto the end. And thus we have done with our second argument, for the confirmation of that doctrine, which teacheth a possibility of the saints' defection, and this unto death.

A third argument is this. That doctrine which representeth God, as weak, incongruous and incoherent with himself, in his applications unto men, is not from God; and consequently that which contradicteth it must needs

be the truth: But the doctrine of perseverance opposed by us, putteth this great dishonour upon God; represented him weak, incongruous, &c. Ergo. The major proposition in this argument is too great in evidence of truth to be questioned. The minor is made good by this consideration; viz., that the said doctrine bringeth God upon the great theatre of the Scriptures, speaking thus, or to this effect, in the audience of heaven and earth, unto his saints. “You that truly believe in my Son Jesus Christ, and have been

world, and he entangled herewith, that your latter end shall be worse than your beginning; that if you shall turn away, all your former righteousness shall not be remembered, but you shall die in your sins, and suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. On the other hand, if you shall continue unto the end, my promise is that you shall be saved. Therefore strive to enter in at the strait gate, quit yourselves like men, labour for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life, and be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith

express sense of the Lord Christ, where he saith, “But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved,” Matt. 24:13. Therefore we shall, I suppose, be excused from further proof of this, without any prejudice to the cause in hand. The consequence in the major proposition stands firm upon this foundation: no act of the creature, whereunto it is necessitated, or which it cannot possibly decline, or but do, is by any law of God, or rule of justice, rewardable. Therefore if the saints be necessitated

them faithful unto death?
In like manner, when in his
epistle to the Church of
Thyatira, he writeth thus,
“And he that overcometh,
and keepeth my works unto
the end, to him will I give
power over the nations,”
Rev. 2:26, doth he make
this promise of giving
power over nations with
any other eye or intent,
than to raise hereby a spirit
of Christian valour and
resolution in them, not to
give over fighting the good
fight of faith unto the end,
which, would be the victory
or conquest here intended ?
Not to instance more

performance whereof is as well in their power to decline as to exhibit.

A fifth reason evincing the same conclusion is this: “They who are in a capacity or possibility of perpetrating the works of the flesh are in a possibility of perishing, and consequently in a possibility of falling away, and that finally, from the grace and favour of God, in case they be in an estate of this grace and favour at the present: But the saints, or true believers, are in a possibility of perpetrating the works of the flesh :

Therefore they are in a possibility also of perishing, and so of falling away from the grace and favour of God wherein at present they stand.” The major proposition in this argument, viz. that they who are in a possibility of perpetrating or customary acting the works of the flesh, are in a possibility of perishing, &c., is clearly proved from such Scriptures which exclude all workers of iniquity, and fulfillers of the lusts of the flesh, from the kingdom of God, of which sort there are many. “Of the which,” saith

Now that true believers are under a possibility of perpetrating and committing such sins as these, which was the effect and sense of the minor proposition, is altogether as evident as the former, as both the Scriptures last cited, with their fellows, being in special manner directed unto true believers, as also the sad and frequent experience of such persons as these falling into such sins, do abundantly manifest. Nor is this proposition denied by our adversaries themselves. Therefore,

sufficient matter of exclusion against them. Now how vain a thing, and unworthy the Spirit of God, is it to threaten men with such a punishment, in case they shall commit such or such particular sins, who are at present obnoxious unto it, and shall certainly suffer it, whether ever they shall commit any of these sins or no ?

3. There is not in the said dehortations or threatenings the least intimation of any difference of persons, in respect of their present estates or conditions, but only a

designation or nomination of such things which exclude from the kingdom of God.

4. To affirm that God excludeth unbelievers from his kingdom for the committing of such sins which, according to the sense of our adversaries, they have no sufficient power to refrain, and, according to truth, have no such provision or furniture of means to refrain as true believers have; and to affirm withal, that yet he excludeth not believers for such commissions, whom they acknowledge to have

murderers, and
whoremongers, and
sorcerers, and idolaters,
and *all* liars, shall have
their part in the lake that
burneth with fire and
brimstone,” &c. Rev. 21:8.
Again: “And there shall *in*
no wise enter into it (the
new Jerusalem) *any thing*
that defileth, neither
whatsoever worketh
abomination, or maketh a
lie,” &c., ver. 27. In the
former of these passages,
“*all* liars, and,”
consequently, “*all*
murderers, and *all*
whoremongers,” &c., are
adjudged to have “their

portion in the lake that burneth with fire,” &c. In the latter, that “*any thing* that defileth, or *whatsoever* worketh abomination, shall *in no wise*,” (GREEK,) or, upon no terms or conditions whatsoever, “enter into the new Jerusalem.” Therefore, when God threateneth and saith, that “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers,” &c., “shall inherit the kingdom of God,” evident it is that he includeth as well believers as unbelievers.

If it be objected, But true believers have a promise

perpetrate the works of the flesh out of infirmity, in strictness of interpretation, involves a contradiction. For to do the works of the flesh, implies the dominion or predominancy of the flesh in the doers of them; which in sins of infirmity hath no place. The apostle clearly insinuates the nature of sins of infirmity in that to the Galatians: “Brethren, if any man be overtaken with a fault, (GREEK, *i. e.* he prevented, or taken at unawares in, or with some miscarriage or sin,) ye that are spiritual restore such an one in the

of the heart actual belief of remission of sins, and making the sinner liable to eternal death, unless he should be forgiven. In one word, sin reigning is to obey the lusts of the flesh. Even those that are regenerate sometimes fall into this sin, as David, Peter: and this the apostle's exhortation witnesseth." And afterwards, speaking of regenerate men and true believers, he grants that they may " mortally, and against the dictate of their consciences, rush (into sin) as Aaron, David, Peter, did;" and saith moreover,

that “when they thus sin, they lay waste their consciences, disturb the Holy Ghost, lose the joy of their heart, and incur the wrath of God.” Doubtless these are not the symptoms or effects of sins of infirmity; though the author is pleased to say, that which I think pleaseth few men to believe, that the sins of Aaron, David, Peter, were not committed by them, *ex contemptu Dei*, out of any contempt of God, but out of a preoccupation with or through the infirmity of the flesh. Concerning the sin of

David, certain I am that the prophet Nathan, by the word of the Lord, chargeth it upon his despising or contempt of the commandment of the Lord, 2 Sam. 12:9. Ursine is yet more cordial and through in the point. “The most sad falls,” saith he, “of holy men, as of Aaron, making the golden calf, for which God being angry was minded to slay him; and of David, committing adultery and murder, to whom Nathan said, Thou art a man of death, do plainly show that even regenerate men may rush (or fall

infirmity, lay hold on this shield. “Such men as these,” they say, “never sin with their whole wills, or with full consent.” Therefore when they sin, they never sin but through infirmity. That they never sin with full consent, they conceive they prove sufficiently from that of the apostle: “For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil, which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me,” Rom. 7:19, 20. I answer,

1. That the saints oft sin

corruption, &c.

If it be demanded, But if the Spirit of God in true believers, be greater and stronger in his lustings, then the flesh in his, how cometh it to pass, that in the spiritual duel, the flesh so frequently prevaieth? I answer, The reason is, because the Spirit acts not, at least to the just efficacy of his vigour and strength, but only when his preventing or first motions are entertained or seconded with a suitable concurrence by the hearts and the wills of men ; through a deficiency or

draw, or obtain, further strength and assistance from him, in order to the great and difficult work of mortification. In respect of which concurrence also with the Spirit in his first and more gentle applications of himself unto them, they are said to be led by the Spirit; as by their comportments with him in his higher and further applications, they become filled with the Spirit, according to that exhortation of the same apostle to the Ephesians: “but be ye filled with the Spirit,” Eph. 5:18; *i. e.*

against the evil which he did, immediately before the doing of it: yea, and that he would not have done it, had not the temptations mentioned overcome that inclination. The case is every whit as clear in Pilate; viz. that he gave the sentence of death against Christ, with great reluctancy of mind and will preceding, and so not with fulness of consent, in the sense declared. He would gladly have washed his hands of the business, and desired Caiaphas and the rest of the priests and elders to “take him, and

apostle mentioned, Rom. 7., I answer further, that when he saith, “The evil which I would not, that I do,” he doth not speak of what he always and in all cases did, much less of what was possible for him to do, but of what he did ordinarily or frequently, or of what was very incident unto him, through the infirmity of the flesh, viz. through inconsiderateness, and anticipation by temptations to do such things, which, whilst he was in a watchful and considering posture, and from under the malign

discover themselves to be rotten and corrupt, they should be cut off by the spiritual sword of excommunication? And doth not such a dismembering as this rather tend to the honouring and adorning the body of Christ, than any ways to maim or deform it? And for such a dismembering of the body of Christ, which the doctrine in hand supposeth to be causeable by the members themselves, as viz. by the voluntary disfaithing of themselves through sin and wickedness, neither is the permission of this, upon

such terms as it is permitted, either unworthy Christ, or inconvenient to the body itself. For, as in a politic or civil corporation, it is better that the governors should permit the members respectively to go or be at liberty, that so they may follow their business and occasions in the world upon the better terms, though by occasion of this liberty they may behave themselves in sundry kinds very unworthily, than it would be to keep them close prisoners, though hereby the said inconveniences might certainly be prevented: in

like manner, it is much better for the body of Christ, and for the respective members of it, that he should leave them at liberty, (especially upon such terms as he doth, and which have formerly been declared,) to obey and serve God, and follow the important affairs of their souls freely, and without any physical necessitation, though some do turn this liberty into wantonness, and so into destruction, than it would be to deprive them of this liberty, and to cause and constrain them to any course whatsoever out of

necessity, though, it is true, the committing of much sin and iniquity would be prevented hereby in many. The reason of the comparison between the one course and the other, as now it hath been stated and asserted, hath been already laid down and argued in this chapter. The dismembering of the body of Christ's apostles, by the apostasy of Judas, was no disparagement, either to Christ himself or it.

2. For the interchange of members between Christ and Satan, the Scripture presenteth it as a thing

possible, yea, as frequent and ordinary. “Know ye not,” saith the apostle, “that your bodies are the members of Christ ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot ?” 1 Cor. 6:15. In the Original it is, “*Ἀρας οὐν τὰ μίμη τον Χρίστον ποιήσω, &c.* i. e. “Taking away the members of Christ, shall I make them,” &c. meaning, that true believers, who only are the members of Christ, disrelate themselves to him, cease to be members of his, when and whilst they live in a course of whoredom and

adultery, and make themselves members of another far different relation, viz. of those harlots, with whom they sinfully converse, and consequently, by such a mediation, of the devil. Calvin himself, commenting upon the next words, "Know ye not," &c. expressly affirmeth, that "He that couples himself with an harlot, hereby becomes one body with her, and therefore pulleth away a member from the body of Christ." And both Jerome and Ambrose long before him, carried the apostle's meaning in the words the same way as they

repetition, of some generation or other. It cannot import a repetition of the natural generation of men, the sense of Nicodemus, John 3:4, in this point was orthodox, who judged such a thing impossible,) therefore it must import a repetition of a spiritual regeneration; unless we shall say, which I know is the road opinion, that it signifies only the spiritual regeneration, with a kind of reference unto, or reflexion upon, the birth natural. But it is the common sense of divines, that the two generations

reiteration of nigrifaction; nor when a regenerate or mortified man dieth his natural death is he said to reiterate or repeat his spiritual death. Therefore I rather conceive that regeneration, which the Scripture makes appropriable only unto persons living to years of discretion, who generally in the days of their youth degenerate from the innocency of their childhood and younger years, and corrupt themselves with the principles and ways of the world, relates not unto the

original sin; only that indeed hath been said, which supposeth that that sin which is in children is taken away by the death of Christ, so that they are generally whilst children in the favour of God through Christ, notwithstanding that sin which is in them. Neither is this any thing more than what Musculus himself upon the place clearly avoucheth in respect of all children, without exception, “that have been baptized.” But this only by the way.

Nor doth that of the apostle any ways oppose,

either the possibility, or
conveniency of a second
regeneration: “ For though
you have ten thousand
instructors in Christ, yet
have ye not many fathers,
for in Christ Jesus I have
begotten you through the
gospel, 1 Cor. 4:15, because
he speaketh here, not of
what they were incapable of
having afterwards, but of
what their state and
condition was at present by
his means and ministry.
That which he remindeth
the Corinthians of in the
metaphorical notion of his
being a father unto them,
and the only father they

of things without our measure, that is of other men's labour;" and presently after, "To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast of another man's fine of things made ready to our hand," 2 Cor. 10:15, 16. In these expressions of his, not boasting of things without his measure, of other men's labours, of things prepared to his hand, &c., he obliquely taxeth the ambitious vanity of those vain-glorious teachers whom these Corinthians so much applauded with an

amongst them begotten to the faith through the gospel, by other ministers and teachers besides him; nor but that, in case any of those who had been begotten by him, should apostatise from the faith, they might be again recovered, and so be again begotten by others. The substance of this interpretation is delivered by Calvin himself upon the place. “If any objecteth,” saith he, “how can Paul deny those to be fathers who succeeded him, when as there are new children begotten unto God, daily in

that he is a condemned man.” There is nothing in the allegation in hand worthy any further consideration: it is all face, and nothing heart against the cause which it pretends to fight.

Another argument, demonstrative of the doctrine pre-asserted, is this: “That doctrine which is according unto godliness, i. e. whose natural and proper tendency is to promote godliness in the hearts and lives of men, is evangelical, and of unquestionable comportance with the

truth: Such is the doctrine which teacheth a possibility of the saints' declining, both totally and finally: Ergo.

The reason of the major proposition, though the truth of it needs no light hut its own to be seen by, is, because the gospel itself is a "doctrine which is according unto godliness," 1 Tim. 6:3; a "truth according unto godliness," Tit. 1:1; , a "mystery of godliness," &c., 1Tim. 3:16; i. e. a doctrine, truth, and mystery calculated, contrived, and framed by God with a singular

aptness, and choiceness of ingredients, for the advancement of godliness in the world. Therefore what particular doctrine soever is of the same spirit, tendency, and import, must needs be a natural branch thereof, and of perfect accord with it. This proposition then is unquestionable.

Nor can the minor lightly be less unquestionable to him, that shall duly and impartially examine and weigh the frame and import of it. For what doctrine can be more proper or powerful to promote godliness in the

degenerate, and turn loose and profane, and continue never so long in such a course, is most manifestly destructive unto godliness, and encouraging above measure to profaneness.

If it be objected and said; Yea, hut the assurance of the unchangeableness of God's love towards him that is godly, is both a more effectual and persuading motive unto godliness, and more encouraging unto a persevering in godliness, than a doubtfulness or uncertainty, whether God will be constant in his affection to such.

teacheth and asserteth the same unchangeableness, but conditionally, and upon the perseverance of him that is godly in his course. So that this doctrine teacheth as much certainty of the love of God towards him that is godly as such, and as continuing such, as the other doth. And the truth is, that the other doctrine, rightly interpreted, doth not so much promise absolutely the certainty of God's love to him that is godly, as it promiseth conditionally the certainty of this love to him that is profane, viz. in case,

these, viz. which hold forth such great and blessed rewards, and withal require and enjoin holiness, by way of condition, for the receiving and enjoyment of them, are of the most sovereign efficacy and import that can be imagined to persuade you unto holiness. Nor can any instance, I believe, be given from the Scriptures, where the Holy Ghost presseth or persuadeth unto action or ways of righteousness, by any other kind of promise than that which is either in form or in matter (*i. e.* in sense and meaning)

people;) “yet ye say,
Wherein have we wearied
him ? When ye say, Every
one that doeth evil is good
in the sight of the Lord, and
he delighteth in them; or,
Where is the God of
judgment?” Mal. 2:17.
Clearly implying, 1. That to
say that God delighteth in
them that do evil, is highly
displeasing and
dishonourable to him,
amounting to no less, being
interpreted, than a denial
of his being a God of
judgment, *i. e.* of his
wisdom and righteousness,
or that he puts any
difference in his affections

enemy unto such actions, which men of confidence and courage are apt and ready to undertake. I answer,

1. That the strength of this objection hath been already trodden down, and that more than once. See pp. 418, &c. of this chapter: and more upon the same account, Chap. 9, I here add,

2. That the saints, notwithstanding the possibility of their final falling away, have, or may have, such an assurance of the perpetuity of their standing in the grace and

he precious in mine eyes,
and mine heart shall be
towards thee in the greatest
love and dearest affection for
ever; and thou shalt inherit
my everlasting kingdom, thy
desperate rebellions against
me notwithstanding.” I
know my opposers are not
wont to deliver themselves,
or express their doctrine in
such terms as these, nor will
they, haply, well bear such a
representation of it as this:
but I appeal to their
consciences, and to the
impartial reasons of all
unprejudiced men, whether
their doctrine of
perseverance doth not,

commandments, and abide in his love,” John 15: 9, 10. By the way, had there been an unavoidable necessity lying upon the disciples to continue in Christ’s love, there had been no necessity of his exhortation unto them in order thereunto. Who persuades a man to do that which is not in his power to neglect, or not to do? In like manner, had there been a like unavoidable necessity upon the disciples to keep Christ’s commandments, doubtless he would not have prescribed it unto them in the nature of a conditional means for their abiding in

incident unto them, yet they shall not lose his favour or perish, is to pretend nothing but what hath been thoroughly answered already, especially in the ninth chapter. I only add here,

1. That the weakness of the flesh, or the aptness of miscarrying through this, is no reasonable ground of fear unto any true believer of his perishing, considering that no man loseth or forfeiteth the grace and favour of God through sins of weakness or infirmity. It is only the strength of sin and corruption in men that

exposeth them to the danger of losing the love of God.

2. If the saints be willing to strengthen the Spirit in them, and make him willing, proportionably to the means vouchsafed unto them by God for such a purpose, this will fully balance the weakness of the flesh, and prevent the miscarriage and breakings out hereof. “This I say then,” saith the apostle, “walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” And again: “If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law,” Gal. 5:16, 18, and consequently are in no danger of losing the favour

bom of God," 1 John 3:9. Which passage of Scripture the reader may find unfolded at large, Chap, 10., page 274. The same apostle, to the same purpose, had said a little before, "He that committeth sin is of the devil," and, consequently, no saint or true believer. And again, a little after, he saith, " In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God," &c. Afterwards thus: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his

commandments; and his commandments (*i. e.* the keeping of his commandments) are not grievous,” 1 John 5:3, viz. to him that loveth God, *i. e.* to a saint or true believer: It followeth, “ For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? ” From these passages, with many others of like import which might have been added from the same apostle, it is fully

that is in them, and of maintaining that holy principle we speak of in strength and vigour, by such means as God most graciously and indulgently vouchsafeth unto them in abundance for such a purpose. And thus we see, all things impartially weighed and debated to and fro, that the doctrine which supposeth a possibility of the saints' final declining, is the doctrine which is "according to godliness," and the corrival of it an enemy thereunto.

That doctrine, whose

argued and evinced in the ninth chapter; where we demonstratively proved that the doctrine we now assert is of the most healthful and sound constitution to make a nurse for the peace, and joy, and comforts of the saints, whereas that which is opposite to it is but of a melancholic and sad complexion in comparison. The ground we built our demonstration upon was this: That doctrine which is of the most encouraging, quickening, and strengthening import to the Spirit and grace of God in

commandments, refraining
“all false ways,” as David
speaketh, abstaining from
the works of the flesh, &c.
As, on the contrary, that
root of bitterness in the
saints, from which fears
and doubtings,
perplexities, agonies, and
consternations of soul
spring, is the flesh, when,
for want of a sharp bridle
still kept in the jaws or lips
of it, it breaks out, becomes
unruly, and magnifies itself
against God and his laws.
These things we prosecuted
more at large in the
forenamed chapter; where
likewise we proved, above

argument.

That doctrine which evacuates, and turns into weakness and folly all that gracious counsel of the Holy Ghost, which consists, partly, in that diligent information which he gives unto the saints, from place to place, concerning the hostile, cruel, and bloody mind and intentions of Satan against them; partly, in detecting and making known all his subtle stratagems, his plots, methods, and dangerous machinations against them; partly, also, in furnishing them with

serious and gracious applications of the Holy Ghost unto the saints, must needs be a doctrine of vanity and error; and, consequently, that which opposeth it, by like necessity, a truth: But such is the common doctrine of absolute and infallible perseverance: Ergo.

The major in this argument is greater than exception. For doubtless no doctrine which is of an undervaluing import either to the grace or wisdom of the Holy Ghost in any Scripture transaction, can be evangelical or consistent

lion seeking whom he may devour, who will set himself with all his might to thrust you headlong into all manner of sins, and so to separate between God and you for ever : and truly I am afraid lest, as the serpent by his subtlety deceived Eve, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus, lest the tempter should any ways tempt you, and my labour about you be in vain. Therefore watch, pray, and resist him stedfast in the faith; take unto you the whole armour of God, that

rules, precepts, and cautions, how to escape this danger, when as both himself knows, and the person admonished likewise knoweth, and this with the knowledge also of the admonisher, that it is a thing altogether impossible that ever the danger should befall him, or the evil, against which he is so solemnly cautioned, come upon him ? Therefore they who make the Holy Ghost to have part and fellowship in such weakness as this are most insufferably injurious unto him.

And whereas they still

through their own weakness, and what through the subtle baits and temptations of Satan, may so fall away, &c.; I answer, that this is but a fig-leaf sought out to cover the nakedness of their opinion, which hath no strength at all nor wear in it. For what though it were in a thousand other respects never so possible for true believers to perish; yet if it be altogether impossible in such a respect, which overrules all those other, and which will, and of necessity must, hinder the coming of it to

pass, all those other notwithstanding, it is to be judged simply and absolutely impossible; and all those respects wherein it is pretended possible, are not to be brought into account in such a case. The rule in the civil law and in reason is, *omnia invalids nihilo sunt aequiparanda*, *i.e.* all things, which (together) are invalid, are to be judged as none at all. Yea, the Scripture itself, when it speaks of any thing which God hath promised, or engaged himself to bring to pass, though there be never so many second

means whereof there is an impossibility, though neither merely logical or natural, nor yet merely moral, but compounded, and, as it were, mixed of both, such as hath no place in the condition of any mere creature whatsoever, that he should be actually changed to the days of eternity. So that in respect of the personal union with the Godhead, even Christ-man is to be looked upon as simply and absolutely unchangeable, a prerogative royal, wherein neither saints nor angels have part with him. And

doing righteously, though it was not a mere logical or irresistible necessity neither, as was lately intimated, but such as it was, it was contracted by himself, and that voluntarily and freely, the Godhead or the Divine nature personally united with the human, which was as much, as properly, as essentially Christ as the human nature itself in this union, voluntarily and freely deriving unto the human, so united unto it, such a fulness of grace, holiness, and goodness, from which that necessity

well-doing which was found in him. I shall only add one argument more, and therewith conclude this chapter.

That doctrine which naturally and directly tendeth to beget and foment jealousies and evil surmises between brethren in Christ, or such as ought cordially to love, reverence, and honour one another, is not confederate with the gospel, nor from God; and consequently, that which contradicteth it must needs be a truth: The common doctrine of unquestionable and unconditioned

perseverance is a doctrine of this tendency, apt to beget and foment jealousies, suspicions, and evil surmises between brethren, or such as ought to love and respect one the other as brethren in Christ, &c. Ergo. The major in this argument will, I suppose, meet with no adversary; and therefore needs no second. The minor standeth firm and strong upon this foundation. That doctrine which teacheth and persuadeth me to judge the faith and love of those whom I ought cordially to love and honour as saints

the core, is a high strain of unchristian unworthiness, and what reason itself, competently informed, cannot lightly but abhor.

The premises concerning the subject yet in hand, the doctrine of perseverance, duly considered, it fully appears, that that doctrine, which for these many years last past hath magnified itself in the tongues and pens of men, not only or simply for a truth, but with many great eulogiums, and titles of sovereign dignity, as that it is a fundamental article of the reformed religion, one of the

the truth of that doctrine, which hath been maintained hitherto, concerning the possibility of a total declining in the saints.

CHAPTER 14.

Exhibiting from the Scriptures some instances of a total declining, or falling away, from the grace and favour of God, in true believers.

THE contents and undertaking of this chapter,

to God's own heart," was given unto him by God himself, before he committed these sins, as appears from Acts 13:22, compared with Psal. 89:20; 1 Kings 14:8. In the first of these places it is said: "And after he had taken him away, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he witnessed, saying, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which will do all things that I will." This, with the other places mentioned, clearly speak of the frame and temper of David's heart, and of the

depending, generally acknowledge him to have been a man truly godly and regenerate, before the guilt of the two enormous sins mentioned clave unto him. The question is, whether he continued such, truly godly, under the guilt of the said sins, viz., from the time of the perpetration of them, until the time of his repentance: They affirm, I deny; and give this account of my denial in opposition to their affirmation.

He that commits murder and adultery, not only against the clear light of his

conscience, but with deliberation and premeditated contrivance, and remains under the pollution and guilt of these sins without repentance, is not a man truly godly, or accepted with God: But this was David's case; he committed murder and adultery, not only against the light of his conscience, but, &c. Ergo. The minor proposition is in all points evident from the tenor of the story laid down in chap. 11. and 12. of the second of Samuel, where the Holy Ghost very particularly and at large reporteth the

manner and method of David's actings and behaviour, in order to the committing of the said sins. But this proposition, I conceive, hath so much light of truth shining upon it from the Scriptures, that they who deny the Conclusion will not deny it. For the major; this hath been sufficiently argued and proved in the former chapter, in our traverse of the fifth argument, there propounded to prove a possibility of a total defection in the saints, pages 425, 426, &c., where likewise all the pleas of

exception, commonly made against it, were largely debated and answered to the full. I shall here only add this brief argument for the further confirmation of it. "Whosoever is truly godly, hath by grace and promise from God, a right and title to the kingdom of God. This proposition is current doctrine amongst our adversaries. Therefore I assume: But whosoever commits murder and adultery, and this against the light of conscience, with deliberation and premeditated contrivance, and remains impenitent

under the guilt of such commissions, during such his impenitency, hath no right or title to the kingdom of God : Ergo. This is proved ex abundanti, from Gal. 5:21; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10. (places formerly argued.) Touching the former, the apostle, after a large enumeration of the works of the flesh, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, envyings, murders, &c. subjoins, “of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, *that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*” The

or repentance for them, the apostle could not, either with reason or truth, have pronounced this heavy doom against them, that they should not inherit the kingdom of God. So that David having done two of the most notorious and vile works of the flesh, in the practice or perpetration of murder and adultery, and that, as hath been said, with circumstances of greatest aggravation, doubtless for the time whilst he remained impenitent, in or under the defilement of them, was obnoxious to that law of

death, by which the workers of iniquity or of the works of the flesh, are sentenced with the deprivation or loss of their right and title to the kingdom of heaven: and consequently was not a godly person, or accepted with God. We have already profaned all those lawless sanctuaries, at which men being pursued by the Scriptures lately mentioned are wont to take shelter, as viz. 1. That the said places are not to be understood as applicable unto the saints, (they mean such as at any time have been saints,) but

that it might not run and be glorified.

But some object, that David prayed unto God, during his impenitency under the said sins ; and that this is a sufficient proof that he was all the while a person truly godly, and endued with justifying faith. I answer,

1. It no where appears that David did pray unto God during the term of his impenitency, or until Nathan the prophet came unto him, to awaken his conscience unto a consideration of them. The 51st Psalm, which is indeed precatory and penitentiary,

is in the title said to have been made by David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, (*i. e.* upon his coming unto him,) after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Which implies, that David was now in a posture of repentance, when he conceived the prayer expressed in this psalm.

2. Neither from one act of prayer, nor from many, can the truth or soundness of any man's faith be concluded. Our Saviour himself supposeth that hypocrites pray, and that often, Matt. 6:5; yea, and that the scribes and

his “washing” by repentance necessary to his salvation. The reason is, because true faith giveth a sufficient right and title to salvation; and it is the main stream and current of the gospel, that “whosoever believeth shall he saved.” But if David’s washing by repentance was not necessary to his salvation, how can the Holy Ghost be justified in ranging “murderers and whoremongers” amongst those who “shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the

known that the Holy Ghost presents it almost everywhere as polluting and defiling. So that David, during his impenitency aforesaid, was cut off from all right of entering into the new Jerusalem, both by the general irregularity of uncleanness, as also by the particular incapacities of murder and adultery.

5. If David were a true believer during the time of his departure and absence from God, then may the testimony of former and bypast works of righteousness be accepted by way of proof for the

5.2. The said position admitted for truth, whereas the apostle James demandeth, “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and *have* not works?” James 2:14, he might as well, or rather, have said, “and hath not had works.” For by the tenor of the said doctrine, though a man wants present works, or works of a later edition or performance, whereby to show or manifest the truth of his faith unto men, yea, though his later works give never so pregnant or loud a testimony against the truth

of his faith, yet if he can but say, and make proof, that formerly, though never so long before, he hath been fruitful in well doing, this must be looked upon as sufficiently demonstrative of his faith. Which is notoriously contrary to the manifest bent and scope of the apostle's discourse in that place. 5.3. If the case were so, that men's former works, if good, must be heard against their later works, though never so bad, there is no place or possibility left either for hypocrisy or apostasy amongst men, especially

perseverer in the faith, though his ways and actions should degenerate into the highest strain of wickedness or ungodliness that can be imagined. 5.4, and lastly for this, That passage from God himself by his prophet Ezekiel, formerly opened, “But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live ? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his

trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his *sin* that he hath sinned, in them shall he die,” Ezek. 18:24. This passage, I say, plainly evinceth that the estimate which is to be made of men in point of righteousness and unrighteousness, and, consequently, of faith and unbelief, is not to be made by the import or rule of their former works, but of their latter; no, not though the former have been many, and the latter but few. For the text saith, “In his trespass (in the singular number) that he hath

trespassed shall he die;" implying that any one sin of that kind of sins which the Scripture calls "abominations," whilst unrepented of, translateth him from life unto death, casteth him into the state and condition of an unbeliever.

6, and lastly, If David's repentance, after the perpetration of the foul and horrid sins mentioned, was not simply necessary to his salvation, (and, consequently, himself, during his impenitency, a man of death,) God's sending his prophet

taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from thine house.—Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing before Israel, and before the sun,” 2 Sam, 12:9, &c. From whence, together with the event

suffering it; in which case, his deliverance from it is to be ascribed, not to his present repentance, but to his precedent faith.

Nor can it be said that God's sending Nathan unto David upon such terms of grace as have been mentioned, argueth any election from eternity of David, personally or particularly considered, though it be true that he doth not vouchsafe the like terms of grace or means of repentance unto all other sinners. Because, 6.1. If David was a true believer, and so in an estate of grace,

when Nathan came unto him, he was under the wing of election, and in the way of life and salvation; and consequently this sending to him by God did neither argue, pro nor con, such his election. 6.2. There might be some equitable consideration on David's behalf, though not known unto us, on which God might ground a dispensation of more grace and mercy towards him than towards other sinners, in whom the like consideration is not to be found. For though we affirm and hold, that

import of that great attribute of his, which the Scripture calls *ἀνθρωποληψία*, 1 Pet. 1:17, or a non-acceptation of persons, as likewise from that equality in all his ways which the Scripture with no less evidence asserteth, Ezek. 18:25, 29. But why, or how it should be equitable in him to make such a difference between David and many other sinners, between whom notwithstanding he maketh it, may very possibly be indemonstrable by men; because all the qualifying circumstances on David's

efficacy, though not literally or formally the same, in order to his repentance, would be vouchsafed unto him which were granted unto David.

A second Old Testament instance of a total recidivation from grace or true faith we find in Solomon. That Solomon before his fell by idolatry, and other sinful miscarriages, of which more presently, was a true believer, a regenerate man, a son of God, is the constant opinion of those that teach an impossibility of a total falling away from

thereof publicly said, that
“Solomon practised in sin
and wickedness,
whatsoever the lust and
licentiousness of a king
could stretch themselves
unto.” The sad history of
his wickedness is drawn up
by the Holy Ghost himself,
1 Kings 11:1, &c., where,
having reported his
disobedience to the law of
God, by which the Israelites
were prohibited to marry
with the daughters of a
strange god, in taking unto
him no fewer than seven
hundred wives and three
hundred concubines of the
women of the Moabites,

Ammonites, Edomites, &c., and withal, the several abominable idolatries, wherewith he came to be polluted hereby, he adds, that “His heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father; that he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; that he went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father; that the Lord was angry with him because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel,” &c. I am no enemy to their opinion who affirm that Solomon returned back

commonly laid hold on to make Solomon a true believer and son of God, during his most dreadful apostasy from him, lately described, hath been detected, both in the last preceding chapter, as likewise in the late examination of David's case. So that we may without fear of the least breach of charity, or of judging any unrighteous judgment, conclude, that Solomon, whilst his heart was turned away from the Lord God of Israel to walk after other gods, as after Chemosh, the abomination

meaning clearly is, that God would not translate the kingdom into another family, or line, as he had transferred it from Saul and his house, but would continue it in David's line by Solomon. The words immediately following, make the face of this interpretation to shine. "And thine *house*, and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." Verse 16.

3, and lastly, It appears from words spoken by David unto his son

Solomon a little before his death, that he understood the mercy, or kindness, promised unto Solomon, not of the saving mercy of God, which, according to the sense of our opposers, is unremovable wherever it be once pitched, but of such a mercy, as hath been declared. “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind. For the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him,

condition of such a fool, will be every whit as good, as of a wise man. “Then I said in my heart, as it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me: and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity:—and how dieth the wise man, as the fool!” &c. So that by the wisdom, which Solomon saith remained with him, in the fullest enjoyment of the delights and contentments of the world, is clearly meant, not a sacred, but a politic or civil wisdom, which first he gave his

the stock, or graven image,
“Deliver me: for thou art
my god;” Isa. 44:17:
wherein he heaped up
strange women, wives and
concubines, as before he
had done wisdom, “like the
sand upon the sea shore”
innumerable ; as if his
meaning were, that all the
while he dishonoured
himself by serving the devil
in these gross, brutish, and
unmanlike courses, his
religious wisdom, his
sound and saving
knowledge of the true God,
remained with him : but of
his middle, most
prosperous, and flourishing

are extremely straitened and put to it, through want of so much as any tolerable argument or proof, for the maintaining of it. It is a sign that the soul is hungry indeed, when every bitter thing becomes sweet unto it.

Thus then we clearly find that there is no special or particular ground or argument at all, of any value, to prove that either David the father, during his impenitency after the horrid crimes of murder and adultery perpetrated by him, or that Solomon the son, during the like

truth and soundness of their faith, is commonly pleaded and maintained, they have been formerly weighed in the balance of the sanctuary and found too light. So that we may very safely conclude, that both David and Solomon were not only under a possibility of a total falling away from the grace of God, wherein they sometimes stood, which is common to all the saints, but that they taught the world the truth and certainty of such a possibility by reducing it into act, I mean by falling

Pet. 3:15, 16. A little after, he placeth the sum and substance of true Christianity in a good conscience. “The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us; not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer (or demand) of a *good conscience* towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,” verse 21; meaning to add this by the way, that baptism, typified or presignified by the ark, wherein Noah and his family were presented from perishing with the rest of the world by water, doth

denied, of what it demandeth of Him in this kind. But that a pure, which only is the good, conscience still springeth from a sound faith in Jesus Christ, and is found in conjunction with it, these places, 1 Tim. 3:9; Heb. 9:14; 10:22, compared together and added to the former, are sufficient to persuade. And concerning the place in hand, some of our best and most orthodox expositors understand the good conscience mentioned to be none other. Musculus, upon the words, “Which” (good conscience) “some having put away

concerning faith,” &c., commenteth thus, “Here he speaketh the same which before he had expressed thus, ‘Now the end of the commandment’ (or charge which I give thee) ‘is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, from which some going astray have turned aside to vain jangling,’ ” &c. His words immediately following, to which I refer the reader, are every whit as plain and pregnant to the same point: showing, that by a good conscience, he doth not understand a conscience

only morally good, and such as may be found in mere natural men ignorant of Christ and the gospel, but a conscience spiritually or Christianly good. Nor is Bullinger, his compeer, of any other mind. “The safest ship,” saith he, upon the place, “in this vast sea of a world of errors and wickednesses, is canonical (or scriptural) truth, pure faith, and sincere charity.” In which words he explains the apostle’s good conscience by sincereness of love or charity. Nor could Calvin himself finish what he had to say upon

the place, until he had given testimony to the same truth. “The metaphor, saith he, “taken from shipwreck answereth most aptly. For it implies that the course of our navigation (in the world) must be steered by a good conscience, that so our faith may come safe into the haven, otherwise we shall be in danger of shipwreck.” Doubtless, he doth not mean that the course of our navigation through the world, that so our faith may come safe into the harbour, should be steered or guided by a mere moral conscience, how

good soever in this kind, or by such a conscience as Cato, Socrates, or Seneca had, or might have had. Such a conscience as this is no fit steersman or guide to such a faith, with which, or by which, they must make the port of heaven, whoever arrive there. Therefore, certainly he conceiveth that it is such a good conscience, the putting away of which the apostle renders as the ground, reason, or cause why some make shipwreck of faith, the goodness whereof ariseth from such a faith which accompanieth

justifiable grounds, and with a good conscience, inasmuch as I have obeyed God in so doing; of which I am ready to give you a perfect account, if you please to hear me.” This to be the true purport and drift of the apostle’s words, the sequel of the context makes yet more apparent. For, upon the hearing of the words in debate uttered by him, Ananias the high priest was sorely offended, and commanded the standers-by to smite him on the mouth, for so speaking. Now it is no ways reasonable to conceive that

forefathers with a pure conscience, his meaning only is, that he serves none other God, but him whom his forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worshipped, and that him he served with a pure conscience, as they also did. To qualify the Jews, who took great offence at him for changing his religion, and withal to make this practice of his more passable with others, he oft recourseth to this apology, viz. that in the profession of Christianity, he serves no other God but the God of his forefathers.

See Acts 22:14; 24:14; 26:7; 28:20, &c. In this sense Calvin himself interprets the place in hand, on which he hath these words, amongst others of like import, "Certain it is, that Paul's conscience was not always pure, inasmuch as himself confesseth, that through hypocrisy he was deceived, when he indulged himself a liberty of lusting. For whereas Chrysostom excuseth his pharisaism, in that he opposed the gospel out of ignorance and not out of malice, it no ways satisfieth. For the eulogy,

or commendation, of a pure conscience is not vulgar or common; neither can it be separated from the sincere and serious fear of God. Therefore I restrain his words to the present time, thus: ‘That he worshipped one and the same God with his forefathers: but now, since he was enlightened by the gospel, he worshippeth him with a sincere affection of heart’” and soul. It were easy to second Calvin, with several others of his own band, in the interpretation mentioned: but when little is to be done, much help is but a burden. Thus then we

any thing accompanying destruction; because it is such a faith which the apostle exhorts and encourageth Timothy to hold fast, “holding faith and a good conscience, which some having put away, concerning faith, (which I advise thee to hold and keep,) have made shipwreck.” Doubtless the apostle would not have persuaded Timothy to hold or keep such a faith with which he might perish: nor had the making shipwreck of no better a commodity than so, been any such great loss unto him. (3.)

That faith which he exhorteth Timothy to hold, must needs be supposed to be that faith which he was possessed of at present, and which was now in him. And that this was a true faith, appears from several passages in the two epistles written by this apostle unto him, especially from those words, “ When I call to remembrance *the unfeigned faith* that is in thee, which, dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois,” &c. 2 Tim. 1:5. (4.) The faith which he exhorts Timothy to hold, and, consequently, the faith whereof he

were to believe on Christ to life everlasting, ver. 16.

(5,) and lastly, The faith here spoken of, is such a faith, in the retention or holding whereof the warring of a good warfare consists. This is evident from the context, and connexion between this and the next preceding verse. “ This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee,” (*i.e.* according to the sense and judgments of the prophets, or interpreters of the Scriptures, who

true, sound, and saving faith.

Nor is this any thing but the sense and judgment of very learned and orthodox expositors upon the place. Musculus affirmeth, that the apostle “speaks here the same thing which before he had expressed in these words: But the end of this commandment (or charge) is love, out of a pure heart, and good conscience, and faith unfeigned; from which whilst some went astray, they turned aside to vain jangling,” &c. Presently after, the apostle, he saith, "admonisheth us,

accompanied with
salvation.

The latter we shall not
need to insist upon, it being
generally granted by our
adversaries, that by
“making shipwreck” of the “
faith” here spoken of, what
faith soever it be, is meant
the utter, absolute, and
total loss of it. All
expositors, without
exception, that I have seen,
are unanimous in this.

The line of the same
interpretation is to be
stretched over the other
Scripture also, mentioned
as parallel with the former,
wherein Hymenaeus and

Philetus are said to have “overthrown the faith of some,” by teaching that the “resurrection” was “past already,

2 Tim. 2:18. That by “overthrowing,” is meant an utter and total subversion or destruction of the “faith” mentioned, is every man's sense upon the place. So that the proof hereof would be but an impertinency. That the “faith” here said to have been “overthrown” by the doctrine mentioned, was a true justifying faith, appears clearly from the context. In the verse next

“All physicians,” saith he, “affirm this to be the nature of a (cancer, or) gangrene, that without very present help, (against it,) it spreads to the parts adjoining, and eats into the bones themselves, and gives not over its prevailing progress until the man dieth. For inasmuch as upon a gangrene a mortification or sideration presently followeth, which very suddenly with its contagion infects the other parts, to the universal destruction of the body, Paul elegantly compareth adulterate (or erroneous) doctrines to

such a pernicious contagion. For if you shall once give way unto them, they will proceed and prevail to the destruction of the whole church.” If “erroneous doctrines” may possibly “prevail to the destruction of the whole church,” doubtless they may as possibly, yea, much more possibly, “destroy the faith” of some true believers; considering that the whole church is not made up of hypocrites or formal professors only, but hath many sound and sincere believers in it. Therefore Calvin, in the

spiritually.

In the verse immediately following, the apostle subjoineth, by way of antithesis, “Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his : and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity,” 2 Tim. 2:19. The words in the original are these:

*Ὁ μίντοι στερεός Ἀεμίχιος
τον Θείου ἴστηκεν, &c. i.e.*
"the stable," or sure,
"foundation of God,"
standeth, or "hath stood,"
&c. In these words the

apostle preventeth a scruple or objection which might possibly arise in the minds of some, upon occasion of what he had said concerning Hymenaeus and Philetus their forsaking of the truth, and the overthrow of the faith of some others by means of their error. The scruple or objection is this: If such men of note professing the Christian religion as Hymenaeus and Philetus were, grew out of liking of that faith which sometimes they professed, and forsook it, and besides prevailed with some others

also to relinquish their faith, are not we in danger of falling away likewise, and so of losing all that we have either done or suffered hitherto in a Christian profession ? To this objection or scruple, the apostle, in the words now in hand, answereth to this effect: That notwithstanding the falling away of men, whoever, or how many soever they be, yet the glorious gospel and truth of God therein, stands, and always hath stood, firm, stedfast, and inviolable ; which gospel hath the matter and

i. e. though we men believe not what he hath promised, “yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself,” 2 Tim. 2:13; as if he should say, The unbelief of men, whether of those who never so much as pretended to believe in him, or of those who have revolted from their faith, ought not in reason to be so construed or looked upon as if it were any argument or proof that therefore God should be unfaithful or untrue, considering that it is altogether impossible with his nature and being to “deny himself,” *i. e.*

either to say in words, or to import by action, that he is not a God; the latter of which he should do in case he should promise and not perform accordingly, though it be too well consistent with the nature of men thus to deny him. So likewise where he saith, to the same point, “What if some did not believe ? shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect ?” *i. e.* shall the unbelief of men be interpreted as any tolerable argument or ground to prove that God is unfaithful ? or, which is the same, that he hath no

other, no better faith in him, than that which sometimes miscarrieth and produceth not that for which it stands engaged? implying, that such an interpretation as this is unreasonable in the highest. But to give a little further light to the Scripture opened, “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth,” and to the interpretation lately given, it is to be considered that the word *Ἀιμέλιος*, translated “foundation,” doth not only signify the foundation of a house,

because the firmness or stability of it is further confirmed unto men by that perfect knowledge, declared and asserted in it, which God taketh and hath of all those who truly believe, whereby they become appropriately his; by means of which knowledge and approbation he is in a perfect capacity to make this signal difference between them and others who believe not, or revolt from their faith, viz. to save the one and to destroy the other when time comes. Again, it is said to have this

to argue the case of Demas, Alexander, Hymenaeus, and several others, whose revoltings from the faith are recorded in the Scriptures. Concerning the two latter of the three now mentioned, Hymenaeus and Alexander, it is expressly said, that they were delivered up unto Satan by the apostle Paul, 1 Tim. 1:20. Which plainly sheweth, 1. That they were judged meet by the saints to be received as church-members by them. For otherwise the apostle demands, “What have I to do to judge them that are

in hand standeth in no need of confirmation from these examples; the serviceableness whereof for such a purpose, may possibly be evaded with more plausibleness of pretence than the former. Any one instance of a total declining in him, who hath at any time been a true believer, is sufficient to prove the truth of the doctrine under maintenance : yea, as was said in the beginning of this chapter, though no such instance could be produced, yet may the said doctrine receive

Christ, unto another gospel,” Gal. i. 6. Their removal from him that called them, &c., plainly supposeth, that sometimes they had cleaved unto him, viz. in the cordial embracement of that gospel which he had sent amongst them, and by which he had called them. So again: “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” chap. 3:2, 5. The receiving of the Spirit, is still appropriated unto true believers. “This he spake of the Spirit, which they that *believed* in him should receive,” John

depending upon the works of the law for their justification, it must needs follow that sometimes they were possessed of it and were the children of grace, which also their running well undeniably importeth. "Whereas therefore," saith Musculus upon the place, "he saith that the Galatians ran well, he commendeth their zeal and studiousness in the *true faith* and religion of Christ; signifying withal, that they might have attained or reached the mark of true blessedness, had they persevered in that which

they had well begun;" with more of like import. Let other orthodox expositors be consulted upon these latter, together with the former passages, mentioned by way of proof, that these Galatians were sometimes true and sound believers, and they will be found to carry the sense of them to the same point. On the other hand, several of the said passages, with some others, do as plainly and pregnantly suppose, that at the writing of the said epistle unto them they were wholly alienated from Christ, and had neither part

nor fellowship in the great business of justification by him. They were removed from him that had called them into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel. They were abolished from Christ, they were fallen from grace, they did not obey the truth. Calvin, upon the first of these expressions, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed,” &c., writeth thus, “He convinceth them of a defection, not only from his doctrine, but from Christ himself; for men cannot hold Christ upon any other terms than by

acknowledging, that by his benefit they are freed from the bondage of the law.” Upon the second, “Ye are abolished from Christ,” &c., thus, “The meaning is, if you seek for any part or piece of righteousness in the works of the law, Christ becomes nothing to you, and you are aliens from grace. For their opinion was not so gross, as that they thought they should be justified by the alone observation of the law; but they mingled *Christ* and the law together, otherwise *Paul* should have had no ground to terrify them with

such threatenings as these. What do you mean? you take a course to make Christ unprofitable to you, you bring his grace to nothing. Thus then we see that we cannot place, no not the least part of our righteousness in the law, but we renounce *Christ* and his grace.” Amongst several other passages looking the same way, Musculus upon the former of the last recited places commenteth in these words, “ He had planted the Galatians, and watered them diligently by preaching the gospel of

them at the writing hereof to have been mere nullifidians, or persons void of all true justifying faith, that expositors could not lightly but speak them sometimes true believers, whilst they had the former places before them, and afterwards, persons wholly lapsed from such faith, when they had the latter. The case concerning these Galatians being so evident, we shall argue it no further, but conclude with a brief report of M. Luther's judgment upon it. "At first," saith he, "the Galatians heard and obeyed the truth.

kingdom of grace. He that falleth from grace, simply (and absolutely) loseth expiation (or atonement), remission of sins, righteousness, liberty, and that life, which. Christ by his death and resurrection has merited for us.” Many other passages of like import with these, might readily be cited from this author in his commentaries upon this epistle. So that there is little question to be made, hut that Luther abounded in this sense, viz., that persons truly justified, and in present possession of that

them, dilateth thus: "This expression, after Satan, is observable; because no man can turn aside from Christ, though it be never so little, but he follows Satan. For he reigneth over all who are not Christ's. Hence we are admonished how destructive a thing it is to turn aside from a straight course, which *of the sons of God makes us slaves of the devil.*" So that his sense upon the place clearly is, that the persons here said to have turned aside after Satan, were before this their turning aside, the children of God,

of that interest which a person had in Christ before, is richer in evidence than to need proof. Nor do I find any one expositor, who, casting up the expression, finds it to amount to any whit less.

CHAPTER 15.

Declaring the sense and judgment, as well of the ancient fathers of the church as of modern reformed divines, touching the point of perseverance; and so

concluding the digression concerning this subject.

IT is a vanity whereunto the tongues and pens of learned men, being once engaged and declared for an opinion, especially in matters of religion, are much subject unto, to cast undue aspersions upon, and so to create undeserved prejudice unto, all such doctrines or opinions which are inconsistent with that opinion which themselves are known to hold and to have maintained. Amongst other

but an old infamous error, held only by heretics and erroneous men, but stigmatised and cast out of the church by the orthodox long ago. The truth is, that neither the one consideration nor the other, no, not when they are real, and not in pretence or presumption only, I mean neither the asserting of an opinion by men in many things erroneous, nor the disowning of it by men in most things, and in the main, orthodox, are any demonstrative grounds of the unsoundness of this

opinion, or that it is not from God. How much less when that opinion indeed, which suffers rebuke from men upon such terms, was neither taught nor held by the one, nor rejected or opposed by the other, but only an opinion in some outward lineaments somewhat like unto it, but in heart and substance of matter altogether differing from it ? The doctrine of election or predestination unto life from foreseen faith, or works, is commonly decried and made odious unto men upon this pretence, that it

was a doctrine held by Pelagians and semi-Pelagians, and condemned and cast out of the church for an error by all the orthodox fathers long since. Whereas it is evident from the records of antiquity, that the opinion concerning predestination from foreseen faith or works, which was held by the Pelagians, and rejected by the orthodox fathers, was not simply this, that God predestinated those unto life whom he foresaw would believe or live holily, but whom he foresaw would believe, or live holily,

out of the strength or abilities of nature. The orthodox fathers themselves held and taught predestination from foreseen faith and holiness, as well as the Pelagians, but with this difference: The fathers taught it, from the foresight of such a faith and holiness which men should be enabled unto by grace; the Pelagians, from such, whether faith or holiness, which men should raise or exhibit by the strength of nature. This is evident from what Gerardus Vossius, a diligent and faithful surveyor of antiquity,

demonstrateth in the sixth book of his Pelagian history. “The Greek fathers,” saith he, “always, and all the Latin fathers who lived before Austin, are wont to say, that they are predestinated unto life whom God foresaw would live godlily and well; or, as some others speak, whom he foresaw would believe and persevere, who should believe on him to eternal life, 1 Tim. 1:16. Which they so interpret as to say, that predestination unto glory is made (by God) according to his foreknowledge of faith and perseverance. But they

did not mean the foresight or foreknowledge of such things which a man was to do by the abilities of nature, but by the strength and assistance of grace, as well preventing as subsequent. So that this consent of antiquity no ways helpeth either the Pelagians or semi-Pelagians (in their cause.) For both these held, that the cause of predestination is assignable on man's part, according to all the effects of it; whereas the orthodox fathers acknowledge, that the first (or preventing) grace is conferred, not of

in the latter part of this chapter, in respect of such testimonies from modern writers, which have been already presented in the express words of their respective authors upon another account.

In the first place I shall account unto the reader what the fore-mentioned author, Gerard Vossius, delivers, in his said Pelagian History, for the sense and judgment of orthodox antiquity in the present question about perseverance: “From this additament of Austin’s opinion,” saith he, speaking

of what this father had added to the common doctrine of those who had gone before him, touching perseverance, which he had expressed in his former thesis, “it is manifest enough that both Austin and Prosper, and Pelagius, with his followers, agreed in this, that justifying faith and regenerating grace may be lost, and that they are lost by very many.” A little after: “Therefore they understand not the doctrine or judgment of antiquity who, when they read in Augustin and others that the elect of God either

ancients to be found who, as far as I am able to call to mind, conceiveth that believers have any absolute certainty of their perseverance. They indeed acknowledge that the minds of the children of God ought not to be tortured with any anxiety of doubting, inasmuch as they have a confidence of hope, which may sustain and keep up with sufficient comfort those that may fall, and relieve those that are already fallen. But yet they deny that any man, because he certainly knows that he is at present in the number

of true believers, can therefore promise unto himself, upon any certainty, such or so much favour from God for the remaining part of his life, that he may be as bold as if he had it by revelation from God, that he shall never incur the guilt of adultery, murder, idolatry, though David, Solomon, and others, declined so fearfully from the ways of God as they did; or, in case he shall fall into such horrible sins with them, that he also shall have the time of his life prolonged as David had, until, upon his serious

Thus far Vossius, who in the words mentioned comprehendeth the clear and unquestionable sense of the primitive faith, and of the most orthodox fathers, for several hundreds of years next after Christ and the apostles, concerning the point of perseverance; and therefore subjoineth in the entrance of his demonstration of the said thesis words to this effect: “That the sense and opinion expressed (touching the perseverance of believers) was the common opinion of

death; and in some others that faith cannot be lost; to this he clearly answereth, by that distinction of three several degrees of faith, which they still suppose, affirming, that in passages of the former import, they speak only of faith of the second degree, *i. e.* of such faith which is not only justifying and saving, in respect of the nature of it, but which actually saveth ; and in places of the latter import, that they speak only of faith of the third and highest degree, *i. e.* of a perfect, solid, rooted, and grounded faith. For the

reader's better satisfaction, I shall exhibit unto him the author's own words at large. " This, nevertheless, is to be taken into special consideration, that when the fathers affirm that faith may be lost, and therefore that eternal election cannot rightly be inferred from faith, they do not all speak of any measure or degree of faith whatsoever, since many of them distinguish three several degrees of faith. The first of which gives essence, or truth of being unto faith, in respect whereof it justifieth, and is called a lively faith:

opposite hereunto is a dead and putatitious,” *i. e.* an imaginary “faith, which is proper to hypocrites. The next degree adds duration,” or perseverance, “in respect whereof it saveth,” *i. e.* becomes actually saving: “opposite to this faith is that which we commonly call temporary, (attributing that improperly unto men’s faith, which the Scripture attributes to men themselves,) which is the faith of apostates. The third,” and last “degree, superaddeth solidity: this faith is termed perfect, solid, rooted, which any

time of a man's life gives him assurance; *i. e.* to use the words of Gregory the Great, doth so confirm," or strengthen, "that a man. cannot fall afterwards, and knoweth this most certainly of himself. To this degree of faith a weak faith is opposed, which is the faith of many of the elect. Those passages of the fathers, wherein they say that true faith may be lost, but is always recovered again, always speak of the second degree of faith. But those, where they say that such faith cannot be lost, must necessarily be understood

is at present righteous or just; not justifying in respect of continuance; since if we consider the truth of the end, that faith is not truly justifying, which at any time ceaseth to justify : because no other faith hath the promise of eternal life, but only that which persevereth.”

By the express tenor of these things, it fully appears, that the uniform and constant opinion of all orthodox antiquity was, that true faith, true grace, true justification, and forgiveness of sins, may, by security, carelessness,

Christians for several ages together after Christ. The consideration whereof is abundantly sufficient to stop the mouth of that undue pretext, which presumeth to say, and that with confidence, that the best and most conscientious men were always of this judgment, that true grace is imperishable, and true believers under no possibility of miscarrying finally. But of this we spake more at large in the ninth chapter. I here only add: That when any of the ancient fathers or councils

express themselves in words of any such import as this, that there is or may be a faith so raised, rooted, or strongly built that it cannot either totally or finally miscarry, it is no ways probable that their meaning should be, that there is an utter, simple, or logical impossibility, that such a faith should be wholly lost, but that they rather speak rhetorically, and would be understood of a kind of moral impossibility only, which imports a great difficulty, improbability, or rareness of an event: in which sense

thyself miserable again by sinning.” The comport of those passages with the doctrine of a possibility both of a total and final declining in the saints, is so express and full, that it needs no light of argument to become visible.

Chrysostom, a principal pillar, amongst those made of flesh and blood, of the Christian church, about the year 382, speaketh plainly and without parable the same things with the former, and that frequently. We formerly cited words from him which made this English

sound: “Although the graces and gifts of God are without repentance, yet malice,” or wickedness, “prevailed so far as to dissolve this law. What then is there of more grievous consequence than to remember injuries, which appears to be a subverter” and destroyer “of so great a gift of God, meaning, justification or remission of sins. This father, in his seventh and eighth sermons or orations, inscribed “Unto Theodorus fallen from a virtuous life,” supposeth this as the basis or ground-work of the

fire, cherubims, ark, mercy-seat, tables of stone, golden candlestick, manna: for the calamity which is fallen upon thee is so much more bitter and grievous than that, by how much more precious the sacred things are which were reposed in thy soul. This was a more holy temple than that; for this did not shine with gold and silver but with the grace of the Holy Ghost; and instead of cherubims and ark, had Christ, and his Father, and the Paraclete,” or Comforter, “placed therein. But now it hath them not,

them with for the making
themselves his sons, *i. e.* for
the maintaining of
themselves in this blessed
relation unto the end.
Concerning Judas, his
opinion was, as is evident
from several passages in his
works, that he sometimes
was the child of grace, a
holy and good man. In the
very beginning of his 52nd
oration, extant in the fifth
tome of his works, and
intituled, “That he that
stands ought not to be
confident unto the end, nor
he that is fallen to cast
away hope,” he hath these
words: “Judas, my beloved,

any of those who have stood in an eminent and perfect degree” of Christianity, “I do not conceive that such a one becomes a bankrupt” in grace, “or falls to nothing on a sudden, but that he must needs waste” or consume “by little and little, and by steps and degrees; so that it may sometimes come to pass, that if some short relapse” or fall “happeneth, and he speedily repenteth and cometh again to himself, that he doth not utterly ruin himself, hut recovereth his foot and

Augustin, though somewhat his senior in years, was of the same judgment with the forementioned authors in the doctrine of perseverance, may be sufficiently gathered from that interpretation of his, formerly cited from Musculus, of those words of Paul, “Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?” The reader may please to satisfy himself herein only by looking back to Chap. 13., page 434, of this present discourse. This father elsewhere saith:

knows will continue evil” unto their end “are sometimes good before. So that there is no cause for any man to complain, inasmuch as God is no acceptor of persons. For both Saul and Judas Iscariot were” at first or “before good, the Scripture saying of Saul, that he was a good man, and that there was not a better among the sons of Israel,” so the vulgar Latin readeth, 1 Sam. 9:2. “And the apostle Peter saith of Iscariot, He obtained fellowship in this ministration, with signs and wonders.” In another

place he saith: “Sometimes they are at first good, who afterwards become and continue evil; in which respect they are both said to be written in the book of life, and again to be blotted out of it.” Therefore neither was this father any patron of the doctrine of perseverance, as it is patronised by many at this day.

Cyprian, who lived about the year 250, writing upon the Lord’s prayer, hath words to this effect: “And the servant, who having his whole debt forgiven him by his lord, would not forgive

the seed whereof our Saviour speaketh, is equally sown, but according to the diversity of the ground, part of it is consumed,” or comes to nothing, “another part of it bringeth forth fruit in abundance, yet in a different proportion, some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold.” A little after: “Ofttimes it comes to pass that some of those who are” spiritually “sound, when baptized, if afterwards they fall to sin, are shaken with the unclean spirit returning unto them; so that manifest it is, that the devil is by the faith of the believer,

excluded in baptism, and that, in case this faith of his afterwards fails, be returneth.”

Chromatius, who, according to some writers, had his time of mortality allotted unto him about the year 350, though others bring it down much lower, having upon those words, Matt. 6:12 : “And forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” affirmed, that “unless we forgive our debtors, we make ourselves guilty” of eternal death “before God with our own words,” subjoineth, a little after, thus: “This the Lord

husband, Christ, as becometh her, she *is cast off and driven away from, that life of which she did partake*” Not long after : “Wherefore we must strive, and take heed with the greatest wisdom, that we work out our salvation with fear, as it is written. Whosoever therefore of you are made partakers of the Spirit of Christ, see that in nothing, neither small nor great, you behave yourselves carelessly, nor reproach the Spirit of grace, *lest you be banished from that life which you have now obtained.*” Yet again,

saints may, through sloth and negligence, lose this standing, fall away, and perish.

Basil, surnamed the Great, who lived much about the same time with the last-mentioned author, assigning the differences between the condition of the saints in this present world and that which is to come, asserteth this for one. That “in this life the danger of falling is great; upon which account Paul said, ‘Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall but there,’ meaning, in the future state of glory, “their

steps are firm,” or fixed, “life is unchangeable; there is no more danger of being carried away unto sin. For neither is here any rebellion” or insurrection “of the flesh,” &c. Not long after: “Therefore we men die often before the body cometh by death to be unyoked” or loosed “from the soul.—So that the life of men is made,” or naturally apt “to be accomplished” or fulfilled, “not only with a change, in respect of one age succeeding another, but with falls” or ruins “of their souls through sin.”

The same father in

another homily, this great doctor of the Christian church in his days, owneth the doctrine we now contend for in words to this purpose: “Thou seest them,” speaking of the Galatians, “having the Spirit; thou hast” also “heard, ‘Ye are abolished from Christ,’ and again, ‘Ye are fallen from grace.’ What doth he subjoin after all this, making room” or granting place “for their renewing? ‘My little children, of whom I travail in birth again: “He had once begotten them before; “but he that had once

begotten them refuseth not to beget them the second time unto salvation.”

All the authors hitherto consulted about the sense of antiquity, and of the primitive Christians, concerning the possibility or nonpossibility of the saints relapsing unto death, had served their generations respectively, and were gone off the stage of mortality, before Pelagius was entered to act his part hereon, or at least had not much to do with him. We now come to inquire what their judgment and sense in the

same points were, who either synchronized with Pelagius, and skirmished him, or else took their turns of mortality after him. Concerning the former of these, that star of the first magnitude in the Christian firmament, Augustin I mean, is, I suppose, in every man's estimate, instar omnium, a man that will perform the service alone as sufficiently as if he had twenty more with him to assist him. Questionless, no man was better versed in the affairs of Christianity, or better understood what doctrines

admired, and admired again, that God, to some of his children, whom he hath regenerated in Christ, and to whom he hath given faith, hope, and love, should *not give perseverance*; when as he forgives such great sins unto strange children, and by imparting his grace unto them, makes them children of his own.” A little after: “For of such we dispute, who want perseverance in goodness, and go out of the world by death, with the *goodness of their wills fallen from good to evil*. Let these men answer, if

much as he giveth unto any others of them whose deportment is but the same, I cannot believe, without believing him to be a respecter or acceptor of persons, which I must at no hand believe. Therefore, to me it is no more (scarce so much) a wonder, why God should give perseverance unto some of his children, and not unto others, than it is why he should save those that believe and not others. However, from both the testimonies cited, it is as evident as words could well make it, that the author's sense was, that truly

subjoins words of this import: “So then for the beneficialness of this secret, it is to be believed that some of the children of perdition, who receive not the gift of persevering unto the end, yet begin to live in such a *faith which worketh by love*, yea, and live for a time faithfully and justly, and afterwards fall away, nor are they taken away by death before this happeneth to them.”

Doubtless there is no faith at all, either justifying or saving, but that which “worketh by love;” and yet we clearly see that

Augustin's opinion was that the "children of perdition," *i. e.* such who perish eternally, are very capable of such a faith, and consequently may, yea, and some times do, fall away both totally and finally from it.

The same father, in another tract, discovereth his sense in the point queried in these words: "That of two, both being *godly*, perseverance unto the end should be given unto the one, and *not given unto the other*, belongs to the unsearchable judgments of God." That in

this sentence he speaks of persons truly godly, and not seemingly only, besides the exigency of the passage itself to make the sense of it regular, as well that which goeth a little before as what followeth after maketh manifest. The words a little before are these: “For of Him they receive this” power, viz. of being made the sons of God, “who giveth pious cogitations to the heart of man, by which he cometh to have faith, which worketh by love.” The words a little after, these: “To conclude, were they not both called, and

both followed him that called them? Were they not both of sinners made righteous, or justified, and both renewed by the laver of regeneration ?”

Afterwards, in the same treatise, he cites with approbation the judgment of an orthodox man, of good repute in his days, to whom also he gives the testimony of learning and much acuteness, concerning the reason which moved Christ not to work those “mighty works” among the men of Tyre and Sidon which he wrought in Capernaum, although he

knew that they would have believed, and repented upon the sight of them : “ The Lord Christ,” saith this author, as the father records his gloss, “ foresaw that the men of Tyre and Sidon would afterwards have apostatised from their faith, in case they had been brought over to believe, by such miracles wrought amongst them; in which respect it was out of mercy that he forbore the working of them there, because they had been liable to a much greater punishment, in case they should have turned their backs upon the faith

total falling away, without a final, and again, of both a total and final, cannot lightly be asserted in words more significant and express than these. The same father, in another part of his works, professeth his judgment to the same point thus: “For who dares deny hut that those first men were happy” or blessed “in paradise before they sinned, although they were uncertain how long this their blessedness should continue, or whether it would be eternal? But eternal it had been had they

persevere in the practice and proficiency of righteousness unto the end, unless by some revelation he be assured hereof by Him who, in his just and secret judgment, is not wont to inform all of such a thing, though he deceives none.” That opinion of this father, which lieth large in these words, as in some other of the late-recited passages, and in twenty places besides of his writings, viz. that they who at present are true saints and believers, yea, and know this certainly, yet know not certainly whether

who will not persevere, are, either by the permission, or provision and disposition of *God*, mixed with those who will persevere; that we, by their falling away, being terrified, may with fear and trembling hold on the way of righteousness, until from this life, which is a temptation” or trial of us “on the earth, we shall pass unto another, where pride shall not need to be repressed, nor we have occasion to wrestle against the suggestions and motions of it.” If there be place yet left for any man to doubt or question, whether

Augustin taught the perseverance of true believers at any such a rate of absolute necessity, as it hath been of late commonly taught, and received amongst us, I shall only desire such a man, in order to his thorough satisfaction in the point, to peruse what the forenamed Vossius hath written in the eleventh thesis or chapter of the sixth book of his Pelagian History ; where he shall find, besides several of the testimonies now cited, several others from this father of like consideration and import: together with

some explications of and observations from them ; which, as far as the line of my understanding is able to stretch itself, make it a truth, parallel in evidence with the light of the noon-day, that that learned and judicious father we speak of was a thorough and professed enemy to that doctrine; I mean the doctrine of perseverance hitherto opposed in the digression in hand, All which considered, that saying of Mr. Prynne, viz., “That Augustin is so copious and full to the point,” he means in

that had occasion to declare their judgments in the point, together with councils and synods, were not of the same judgment with Augustin, may be gratified to satisfaction, by recourse had to the oft-mentioned author, Gerard. Joh. Vossius, in his *Historia Pelagiana*, lib. vi., thes. 12. The transcribing of more passages in this kind being already drawn together, and directed unto by another, and that in a book of no difficult procurement, will not, I suppose, be judged necessary, or much

these latter days, is of somewhat a strange, but of a much more sad consideration. But as it often happeneth in sweeping of houses, especially when they are full of dust or soil, that pieces of silver or gold, and other things of value, are either through negligence, or too much haste made in the work, by those that do it, or through a badness of their sight, swept up among the soil, and cast together with it upon the dunghill ; so may it very possibly fall out in great reformati- ons of religion, when corruptions

and matters requiring reformation, whether in doctrine or maimers, are very numerous, and of a long gathering, that together with the corruptions, errors, and things necessary to be removed and abandoned, some things also of worth and good import, and which appertain to the purity and soundness of religion, are renounced, and cast out likewise, partly through too much zeal of an over-hasty dispatch in the work, partly through an injudiciousness in some things, in the principal

reformers; partly through that infirmity of incogitancy, which is so importune an attendant upon flesh and blood, how vigilant soever. Or as it constantly falleth out in purgings and lettings of blood, that together with the bad humours and corrupt blood, somewhat of that which is good, and serviceable for the health and strength of the body, is parted with and lost; so is it hardly to be expected but that when an attempt shall be made to purge the body of Christian religion, being now encumbered and

they more generally, if not universally hold and teach, with Luther himself, whose judgment in the point was briefly touched, Chap. 14. page 477, no other perseverance of the saints or true believers, than that which possibly may miscarry both totally and finally. I shall not multiply quotations from their writings, but only lay before you some passages from Melancthon, who was Luther's companion and ally, together with two or three sayings from Chemnitius; and for the general sense of the

Lutheran party of reformers, in the controversy in hand, refer you to the testimony and confession of a great defender of the common faith in the point of perseverance, who, I believe, was better acquainted with their writings, than any man that shall rise up to oppose him in his testimony.

“There are two errors,” saith Melancthon, “of fanatic men, which must briefly be confuted, who conceit that men regenerate cannot lapse” or fall, “and that though they

to the end whom he hath once received into his grace” or favour, “but from hence, viz. because many shed” or spill “the Holy Ghost, and shake” or dash “faith out” of their hearts “by security, diffidence, and the works of the flesh.” Not long after, speaking of such Scripture passages as these, “Let him that standeth take heed that he fall not” Work out your salvation with fear and trembling,” &c. he saith, “There is a general answer to these sayings; for they are monitory unto men, lest through a persuasion of the

certainly of salvation they degenerate into a carnal security, whereby faith itself is choked and quite put put; and that we should not indulge any corrupt affections, because by this means faith is extinguished; and that, unless we abide in the goodness of God, we shall be cut off, Rom. 11:22. But concerning faith, it abideth not in those who without repentance indulge vicious” or depraved “affections.” The same author, elsewhere having recited very many texts of Scripture which speak of

making shipwreck of faith, of denying the faith, of turning aside from the faith, &c., as 1 Tim. 1:19; 4:1, and 5:8, with several others, speaketh thus: “All these sentences speak of a true, living, and justifying faith, which they teach may be shaken out, cast away, and lost two several ways, as, either by sins against conscience, (for faith doth not remain in those who give way unto and indulge evil desires against conscience, 1 Tim. 1:2, and 5:6,) or else by admitting an error in the foundation, or by overthrowing the

acknowledged by Dr. Prideaux himself, (a man of opposite judgment in the present controversy,) who, as well in the doctrine of perseverance as in those other points of election, reprobation, the death of Christ, &c., coupleth the Lutherans with the remonstrants or Arminians from place to place. See upon this account his lectures De Absoluto Decreto, De Gratia Universali, De Perseverantia Sanctorum, &c. Therefore certainly the Protestant party of the Lutheran denomination are

generally so far from magnifying the necessity or worth of that doctrine which asserteth that fatal perseverance of the saints hitherto opposed, so far from eulogizing and calling it either the fundamental article of the reformed religion, or one of the principal heads or points of doctrine wherein the Protestant or reformed churches have purged themselves from Popish errors, or the foundation of that assurance of salvation, without which that affiance which is requisite unto true faith, cannot stand, or a

gotten Christ, what should we desire more? But if Christ be possessed by faith, we must persist in faith, that our possession in this kind may be perpetual. Therefore Christ hath given himself to be enjoyed by us, upon these terms, or by this law, that as we are admitted by faith to a participation of him, so we should by the same faith preserve and keep so great a good until death.” The conditionality of perseverance in the saints, yea, the non-perseverance of some of them, cannot lightly be asserted in terms

Which is well worth the taking notice of, because when we turn aside out of the right way, we do not only excuse ourselves unto others, but even delude our own selves also.” The same author, writing upon Matt. 24:13, hath these words, “Although the *love* of many being surcharged with the weight of iniquities, shall *fail*, yet Christ admonisheth that this obstacle also must be overcome, lest those that are *faithful* being tired out by evil examples should *start back*, therefore he repeats that saying, that

acknowledging, that by his benefit they were freed from the bondage of the law.” This testimony cannot be eluded by this accustomed put off, viz., that he speaks not of their falling away from true faith, but from the doctrine of faith, or from the profession of faith; because he saith expressly, that the apostle convinceth them of, or reproveth them for, falling away from Christ himself, which is every whit as much, if not somewhat more, than falling away from true faith. Nor can it be supposed that himself,

holding that the apostle charged them with falling away from Christ, should hold that they had not thus fallen away, this being no less than to charge the apostle with charging the Galatians untruly. And besides, saying that they could not, tenere Christum, *i. e.* retain or keep their hold or possession of Christ, but upon such and such terms, he plainly supposeth, that a present hold or possession of Christ may be lost. Elsewhere in the same epistle, the same doctrine goeth to wreck by the pen of the great patron,

or founder rather, of it, in these words. "The meaning is, if you seek for any part or piece of righteousness in the works of the law, **CHRIST** *becomes nothing to you, and you aliens from grace.* For their opinion was not so gross, as that they thought they should be justified by the alone observation of the law, but they mingled," or joined, "Christ with the law. Otherwise Paul should have had no ground to have terrified them with such threatenings as these, "What do you mean? You take *a course to make*

CHRIST *unprofitable to you, you bring his grace to nothing.* Thus then we see that we cannot place, no, not the least part of our righteousness in the law, but we *renounce*” or bid farewell unto “*Christ and his grace.*” Renunciation hath no place, but in such things which were formerly either held, practised, or possessed: nor can the grace of Christ be said to be brought to nothing, in reference unto any man unto whom it was never any thing. He that never had or enjoyed the grace, favour, or good will of

Christ, cannot, by any course or practice whatsoever, be said to bring it to nothing, *i. e.* wholly to deprive himself of the benefit of it. The reader's patience, I suppose, would hardly bear a particular recitation of all the passages and sayings, which with a little search might be drawn together out of the writings of this one author, who is generally looked upon as the main pillar of the common doctrine of perseverance, which yet strike at the very face of it. Yea, I verily believe, that,

so worthy a man, as the
signal usefulness or
necessity of such a
principle or position in
Christianity, without the
help and interposure
whereof, those that are
enemies unto it, know not
how to manage many their
Christian occasions, or
affairs otherwise. The like
observation we shall have
occasion to take up in
reference to all the other
main points held forth and
argued in this treatise, in
opposition to vulgar tenets,
presuming themselves
orthodox, because vulgar.
At present, I shall add only

one testimony more from Calvin, wherein he doth not only or simply assert a possibility both of the total and final falling away of true believers, but even a frequent reduction into act of such a possibility. The place is in his Commentaries upon 2 Pet. 2. “For scarce every tenth man of those who have given up their names unto Christ, retain the purity of faith unto the end. All, in a manner, degenerate” and turn aside “unto corruptions, and being deluded by masters” or teachers “of licentiousness,

grow profane.” By men giving up their names to Christ, he cannot mean, bare, formal, or loose professors, (I mean such who never were other or better than these,) because such as these cannot be charged with a non-retainment of the purity of faith unto the end, but rather with a non-receiving of the purity of faith. Therefore he must of necessity mean sound professors or true believers: and consequently affirm, that there is not one of ten among these, but degenerate into principles

feareth God ; he declareth himself absolutely worthy to bear” or suffer “the punishment due to those former sins, from which lie hath been absolved. And to this sense speak the two places which I have lately cited from Ezekiel. Besides, if he who through mercy hath obtained the forgiveness of a thousand talents, shall refuse to forgive his brother a hundred pence; that is, if he who hath obtained the remission of all his sins from God, Shall refuse to forgive his brother, upon his request made unto him

come to pass, and justly happeneth, that grace once received should be made vain, or frustrate. But this is not to be imputed to any instability of the Divine clemency, which in God hath no place, but unto our wickedness. In which respect the apostle, not without good ground, entreats and warns us, 2 Cor. 6, that we receive not the grace of God in vain.”

The same author, elsewhere, doth not only declare his judgment simply and positively for the doctrine asserted by us, but with a plain intimation,

else can follow but that if a good tree be corrupted, the fruits which were good must become evil? They who from the principles or beginnings of faith, and of the good Spirit, degenerate into perfidiousness or unbelief, render the whole course of their lives, which was partaker of grace, culpable of death. Such as these are they, who, with the Galatians, begin indeed in the Spirit, but end in the flesh. They are liable unto condemnation, and their sins are no longer venial; but mortal, unless they repent, and return to the

grace of the blood of Christ, from which they are fallen; if yet they be fallen upon no worse terms than that, they are in a capacity of returning unto grace. Some I know are otherwise minded in this point, but I freely declare mine own judgment without any injury done to them.” These last words, “Some I know are otherwise minded,” &c. plainly show: 1. That the deliberate and resolved judgment of this author stood for the possibility of a declining in true believers, even unto death, because he asserteth it *ἀντιθεγκῶς*,

and as having weighed the contrary opinion in the balance, and found it light.

2. That in his days though there were some of a contrary judgment to him in the point, yet the greater part of Protestant divines (for of these he clearly speaketh) or at least many of them, were consenting to him. For otherwise he would not have expressed himself thus, “Scio hic a nonnullis,” &c. “I know some are otherwise minded;” but rather have acknowledged his dissent herein from the generality of such men, or from the

common or received opinion, or the like.

But for the clearness and thoroughness of his judgment on that side of the controversy on which we stand, several other passages in his writings speak home. “To this contristation,” saith he, writing upon Rom. 14, 15, “he aptly subjoineth the destruction of those who are offended at the unadvised liberty of the strong. For their mind being weak, through such an offence as this, easily falls to this point; begins by little and little, being

believed before, cannot be said to be without faith, when as notwithstanding they are despoiled of love” or charity. “But we do not grant or admit that such men have faith whilst they live in their sins. For of such the apostle witnesseth, that they profess to know God, but in works deny him. Therefore these men may be said to retain rather a show or shadow of faith than true faith indeed, of which we speak.”

B. Aretius, in his commentary upon 2 Pet. 2:20, plainly enough

“let this suffice us, that eternal happiness is in safety for us, which neither men nor devils can intercept,” or deprive us of, *“unless faith fail us,* wherewith we should depend wholly upon heaven, with the neglect of things minded by mortal men.” He that supposeth or affirmeth a man to be out of all danger or possibility of perishing, but only in case of a failing of his faith, necessarily supposeth: 1, That such a man is at present invested with such a faith, which is of the saving kind; and 2, that

there is a possibility that this faith may fail him before his end. To make an exception to a rule of an impossibility is to sacrifice either to laughter or folly.

Piscator himself likewise entertained this truth at unawares, when in his scholia upon Rom. 14:15, he maketh the apostle to say, that a “believer, for whom Christ died, may, through an offence taken, forsake the profession of the gospel, and so perish out of,” or without, “the faith of Christ.” For what is this, being interpreted, hut to affirm that true

or weighty “a saying upon the supposition; nor would he have applied this saying to the Hebrews, to whom he wrote in the cause which was now in hand.”

These passages also from the same author, are no slender evidences of the propension of his judgment the same way. "Nothing at all shall be wanting to us on the Lord's part, if we be no wanting unto ourselves." And again, "Christ requires only one condition from us, viz. That we abide in him, and be circumspect, and attent to keep ourselves from all sin and unbelief,

hereby plainly declaring, that he understands this promise of Christ in a sense conditional, and not absolute.

Mollerus, upon Psalm 51:12, commenteth that “David lost the Holy Ghost by his sin, and was deprived of his gifts. So that, he departing from or not governing David, his heart became polluted with wickedness of all sorts. Therefore, he prays that a clean heart might be again created in him, which the apostle. Acts 15., calls a heart purified by faith, viz. from sin and the guilt

thereof, that so he might have right thoughts of God, might truly acknowledge God, without hypocrisy or simulation, hut might come unto him, call upon him, believe on him, fear, obey him,” &c. This text needs no commentary.

I might here add the testimony and consent, both of former councils and synods, as likewise of the confessions of many late Reformed churches. But because others, have prevented me in both, as viz. the forementioned Gerard. Joh. Vossius in the former, and P. Bertius in

the latter, I choose rather to desire the reader desirous of satisfaction in either, to consult these authors respectively, than to imbulk our present discourse with transcriptions, which are of so ready an inspection elsewhere.

Only for a taste, I shall here present the reader with a few lines out of the confession of the Reformed churches of Saxony, wherein they professedly give the right hand of fellowship to us in the doctrine held forth in our present digression. “When it is said,” saith this

distinguisheth between sin reigning and not reigning. And elsewhere he saith, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but, if by the Spirit ye shall mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live.' ” With much more to the same point and purpose.

From the premises, exhibited in this chapter, these five things are concludable above all contradiction. First, That the doctrine of absolute and unconditioned perseverance, as it is commonly taught and believed amongst

professors at this day, and as it is stated and maintained in the writings of many Reformed divines, over honoured, many of them, with the style of orthodox, was not known or heard of by the name of orthodox, in the primitive and purer times of Christian religion; nor owned or taught by any of the learned fathers or writers for several centuries of years after Christ. Secondly, That neither since the reformation of religion by Luther and his compeers hath it found entertainment with the

constrained, ever and anon, in their writings, to give testimony unto and to assert the contrary, whether it be by the forcible evidence of the truth prevailing at times over them, or whether it be out of a necessity that ever and anon recurred upon them, to use the principle of the contrary doctrine, for the due managing and carrying on other subjects and discourses. Fifthly, and lastly, That the doctrine of falling away, maintained in the digression yet in hand, hath been held, maintained, and professed,

not only by particular persons, both ancient and modern, of greatest name and note for true worth in every kind, as for sanctity, learning, largeness of parts, soundness of judgment, &c., but by councils, synods, and whole Protestant churches, also, in their confessions. All which considered, we shall need no other demonstration of the importune unreasonableness and vanity of those ecstatical and wild encomiums, or exorbitant depredications of the doctrine of inevitable

assurance which is requisite in and unto true believing cannot stand; such a doctrine, which all true ministers of the gospel ought to inculcate into and whet upon all true believers for their comfort, with other like swelling words of vanity. Doubtless, if it be an error, and confederate against the holiness and truth of the gospel, (a crime which hath been by many competent and sufficient witnesses proved against it,) it is so far from meriting any of those impotent acclamations lately specified, that it really

deserves to have its portion with those merchants and money-changers whom our Saviour with a scourge drove out of the temple, John 2:15, as profaners of the holy design and counsel of God therein.

But, because the learning and authority of the late Synod of Dort is laid hold on by many, as shield and buckler to defend the said doctrine, I shall, for a close of this chapter, and of the whole digression, briefly account unto the reader for such particulars as I judge worthy his cognizance and observation, in and about

same manner as sometimes it did in Herod, when, “ for his oath’s sake,” contrary to his mind and desire otherwise, he caused John the Baptist’s head to be given unto Herodias in a platter, Matt. 14:9. To show how pregnant, or, if you will, how masculine they are, in avouching their judgments, whilst they keep company with their adversaries, is, I conceive, needless, as well themselves (I mean such of them as are yet living) as their friends being persuasible enough hereof, without argument or proof.

concerning perseverance; and leave it to Christian consideration, whether the difference between the two combating parties was of that latitude or weight that the one should deserve the beautiful crown of orthodoxy and honour for their dissent from their adversaries; and the other, the punishment, shame, and reproach of persons so deeply and desperately erroneous, for their non-agreement with theirs. This Synod of Dort expressly granteth, that not only they who are under a possibility of falling away,

dogmatizing with them in the point of perseverance, the fifth and last head of the controversies between them. But the truth is, and an intelligent reader may readily find it, that in other points also, wherein they sentenced the persons mentioned as men so extremely and dangerously erroneous, as in the question about the extent of Christ's death, the extent of saving grace, &c., they deliver and maintain the same things with the persons sentenced by them, if not formally in plainness and expressness of terms,

gospel unto every creature,” he immediately subjoineth, “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned,” Mark 16:15, 16. That “believing” which our Saviour here requires, and unto which he promiseth salvation, is doubtless no other faith, or believing, but a true and unfeigned belief of that gospel of his which his apostles, in the words immediately preceding, were enjoined to “preach unto the world.” And if it shall be said, that men might, or may

reception of the gospel, as it cometh from God, and is declared by him in the writings of the prophets, evangelists, and apostles, into the heart and soul of a man, (which is done by a true and unfeigned belief of, or consent unto it,) translates him from death to life, makes him a child of light, a son of God, an heir of salvation, &c. And what faith or belief, can it reasonably be imagined, should have this mighty and blessed influence upon the creature man, to turn him from darkness unto light, from death unto life,

from Satan unto God, but only the true and unfeigned belief of those glorious mysteries which were brought out of the breast and bosom of God by his Son Jesus Christ, at his coming into the world ?

That a true, cordial, unfeigned belief of the gospel, and things of God, is true justifying faith, hath been the sense and doctrine of the best and most judicious authors, as well ancient as modern, I could instance and prove at large, if it were not somewhat too eccentrical to the business in hand. “It is,” saith

Calvin, “the righteousness,” *i. e.* the justification, “of faith, if we believe that Christ died, and was raised up again from the dead.” Elsewhere he saith, that the apostle Paul “defines those to be faithful,” or true believers, “who have the *knowledge* of sound doctrine;” and pronounceth the faith of Sarah, whom he calls “the mother of all believers,” to consist in this, “That she judged God faithful, or true, and that in his promises.” Luther, speaking of Abraham, saith that “he was justified only upon this, that he gave

credence to the word of God;" interpreting that of Moses, Gen. 15:6, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness as if he had said, "Abraham believed God to be true in his words and promises, and was therefore counted a worthy and righteous man by God." And learned Chamier defines Abraham's faith, whereby he was justified, "Ingentem confidentiam super promissione divina, quamille credidit omnino implendam ;" *i. e.* a mighty confidence of the promise

of God, which he believed would absolutely be fulfilled. Peter Martyr most frequently, and I think I might say constantly, in his writings, placeth justifying faith in a firm belief or assent unto the gospel or word of God. “Our faith,” saith he, “is nothing else but *an assent or firm persuasion of the words of God*. From whence it appears that our faith proceeds from the faith” or faithfulness “of God. For when our experience teacheth us that he is faithful, we readily believe him; and that belief which

Lord by means of his authority.” Once more: “In this dispute,” of justifying faith, “by faith we understand, that *firm assent*, which is of so great strength and efficacy, that it draweth along with it the effect of affiance, hope, and charity, together with all good works, as the infirmity of this present life will bear.” From the latter words of this testimony it plainly appears, that the sense of this author is, that that trust, recumbency, or reliance upon God or Christ, wherein the said Synod, with some others,

persons truly justified, against some of which the said Synod doth not only vouch and teach a possibility of their total and final defection, but even a necessity also ; which is a strain of contest against the necessity of the saints' perseverance, higher than ever any Arminian or Remonstrant wound up his pen unto. "We therefore," saith Gualter, "say, that faith is a certain firm assent of mind arising from the word of God, whereby we acknowledge Christ for such as the Scriptures exhibit him unto us" (or

as the certain word of God.” Beza affirmeth, that “The state of the epistle to the Romans is to be ordered,” or disposed of in our judgments, “thus: That we are saved by God through one Christ, *if we shall believe the gospel.*” Polanus describes justifying faith “A *knowledge and assent*, whereby a man believeth all that to be true which God hath commanded to be believed.” Ursine thus: “Faith is a true persuasion, whereby we *assent* to every word of God delivered unto

us.” “If thou,” saith Mr. Tyndal, the martyr, “*believest the promises of God, the truth of God justifieth thee, i. e. he forgiveth thee thy sins, and taketh thee into favour.*”

Give me leave to instance one author more. Dr. J. Davenant, a member of those convened in the Synod at Dort, *et quorum pars magna fuit*, arguing against Bellarmine, the non-abolition of faith, even in the glorified condition itself of the saints, in respect of the nature, habit, or essence of it, useth this demonstration: viz., that

“those who are in an estate of perfect blessedness are so” affected or “disposed that they are willing to assent unto God, not only because of the evidence of the matter, but also for the authority of the asserter, although the thing affirmed were in itself inevident.” Yea, and further saith, that “there is none of the blessed” or glorified “ones hut will much more readily believe God for the authority of the speaker, than he that is endued with the greatest faith amongst travellers,” (i. e. amongst the saints that axe yet in the

course of their pilgrimage upon the earth.) Therefore, questionless, his sense also was, at least when he wrote these things, that a true, firm, and unfeigned assent unto God, speaking, asserting, or revealing, is true faith and justifying; for about this was the contest between him and his adversary. And besides, the whole tenor of the discourse there managed makes this manifest.

Fearing lest I have overcharged the reader's patience already, I supersede the citation of the ancient fathers, besides

knowledge they should
here mean is not
imaginable, and that out of
this knowledge they may as
oft as is needful (is not this
constantly and without
turning aside ?) act
conformably ? And what is
this hut to bring forth fruits
worthy repentance, yea,
and to equalise the best and
worthiest of the saints in
doing righteousness, which
the Holy Ghost makes the
most emphatical and
unerring property or
character of such men.
“Little children, let no man
deceive you,” saith John,
“he that doeth

absolute necessity, or infallibility of the saints' perseverance in grace or faith unto the end, hath nothing more in it (or rather nothing so much) for the true and real consolation of the saints than that which is contrary unto it. Secondly, Diligent and impartial search hath been made into those passages of Scripture which the greatest advocates of the said doctrine of perseverance mainly insist upon for the defence of it; none of which, it hath been made fully to appear, holdeth any true or real

correspondency with it. Thirdly, The best and most substantial arguments and grounds upon which the said doctrine is wont, by the skilfulest workmen of her party, to be built, have been weighed in the balance, and found too light. Fourthly, The doctrine contrary hereunto and which avoucheth the possibility of the saints' declining, and this unto death, hath been asserted by the express testimony and consent of many Scriptures. Fifthly, This doctrine also hath received further credit and

confirmation from several principles and grounds, as well of reason as religion, and these pregnant and strong. Sixthly, The truth of this latter doctrine hath been further ascertained by several instances and examples of persons, who by their fallings have caused the said doctrine to stand impregnable. Seventhly, This doctrine hath been countenanced, also, by the concurrent sense of all orthodox and Christianly-learned antiquity. Eighthly, It hath likewise received testimony from the generality of that

like themselves, their discursive affairs in other cases. Yea, tenthly, and lastly, That the Synod of Dort itself, convening with a conscientious, if not with a concupiscentious prejudice also (for this is the strong suspicion of many) against it, with its fellows, and intending and provoking one another to lay the honour of it in the dust for ever, hath, at several turns and in divers expressions, according to the interpretation and sense of their own most orthodox and learned friends, yea and some of

blessed Son of God, and Saviour of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ, gave himself a ransom in his death, for all and every man, without exception of any.

CHAPTER 16.

Several other Texts of Scripture (besides those formerly produced in ranks and companies') argued to the clear eviction of truth, in the same doctrine, viz. That the redemption purchased

by Christ in his death, was intended for all and every man, without exception of any.

HAVING in our late digression largely vindicated some material proofs from the Scripture, formerly levied for the defence of that great and most important cause, both of God and men, the universality of redemption by Christ, we now proceed to a further levy upon the same account, and shall raise up more Scriptures to plead the same cause.

Jesus Christ, by his ministers of the gospel. He that should invite a man to a feast, and use such an argument or motive as this, to persuade him to accept of this his invitation, and to come accordingly, viz. that he had made very liberal preparations for such and such other men, but had provided nothing for him, should he not render himself ridiculous by such a strain of oratory?

Thirdly, Evident it is, that very many of those who were invited to this marriage feast by the king, and consequently for whom

the feast was prepared, and for whose sake the oxen and fatlings were killed, never came to partake of the said feast, but were ejected and excluded from it with great indignation, by him that had so graciously invited them. “But when the king heard thereof,” (viz. how they had misused and murdered his servants,) “he was wroth, and sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city,” ver. 7. Concerning whom, likewise, the king said to his servants, that had been

him to exclude them, when he saw their great unworthiness; but this unworthiness of theirs itself. “Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready; but they which were bidden were *not worthy*. Go ye, therefore, into the highways,” &c. Matt. 22:8. Clearly implying, that it was the *unworthiness* of the persons invited, which was the true and proper cause of their exclusion. Neither the import nor sentence of the law, nor yet the judge, or his just severity in giving sentence according to the law, are so

doth not of itself, or in its proper nature, tend to the destruction of any man,” &c.

Fifthly and lastly, The pregnant result of the premised particulars is this, that the marriage feast in the parable was provided by the king, and the oxen and fatlings, here spoken of, killed not only for those who upon their invitation were persuaded to come and partake of them, but as well, and with equal, if not with more especial, intentions on the king's part, for those also who never came to taste of

answer when he calleth. Yet shall not the supper *provided*” or prepared “*for us* he lost, hut God will furnish himself with other guests.” In these passages, this great supposed enemy to the universality of redemption by Christ, clearly supposeth, or affirmeth rather, the same to be a truth; for he expressly affirmeth that God provided a table of entertainment for those who rejected it and never came unto it, and supposeth that the “supper provided” by God “for us,” may, through our neglect of

men,” show themselves more indulgent to their own sense and opinion than will well stand with the ingenuousness and faithfulness required in translators, an infirmity too apparent in them at several other turns; though the truth is, that this translation of the words damnifies their opinion one way as much or more than it gratifies it in another: for in making the apostle to say that the “saving grace of God hath appeared unto all men,” they suppose him to be of their judgment, who conceive the gospel and the

of God, that bringeth salvation unto all men, hath appeared.” The “grace of God,” in Christ, is here said to be *σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις*, salvifical unto all men, not because it is such to all sorts or ranks of men only, or to some men of all sorts and degrees, (as some, not fearing to destroy the clear sense of the Holy Ghost to salve their own, interpret,) but because it is such to “all men” simply and without exception of any. This exposition is confirmed,

1. From the context, in the words immediately

teaching property in it flows from the savingness of it, which the apostle here clearly supposeth, then must the savingness of it necessarily be of equal extent with that property. An act of grace, love, or bounty, inviteth, obligeth no more unto thankfulness than those to whom it is meant and intended. Now, certain it is, that the saving grace of God, held forth and proffered unto all men in the gospel, teacheth, inviteth, persuadeth, obligeth all men without exception, as well one as another, to deny

of is expressly said to be σωτήριος *πασιν* ἀνθρώποις, i. e, “saving,” or salvifical “unto,” or apt to save, “all men.” And of what dangerous, consequence it is to turn the words of the Holy Ghost out of their proper and best known significations into any by, devious, and qualified sense, when there is no necessity of doing it, hath been once and again admonished and declared in the premises.

3. The exposition given fairly accordeth the passage in hand with many other its

detected of vanity, and showed their clear inconsistency with the principles, as well of that “wisdom which is revealed from heaven” in the Scriptures, as of that reason and understanding which are naturally ingrafted in men. If any man’s judgment be yet tempted with a face of any seeming beauty or strength in any of them, he may, I presume, be delivered from further inconvenience in this kind by a second review of the sixth chapter of this discourse, at least if he shall diligently consider

what is to be seen there.

In the next chapter of the same epistle, the apostle addeth light unto light in the business in hand, expressing himself thus : “ But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards men appeared,” &c. 2 Tit. 3:4, 'H xp'iaT°TtiCt n QiXavOpuma the goodness and the love of God towards man. I here demand, How or whether God can, in any tolerable construction of reason or common sense, be said to be *fikavdptairos*, a lover of men, or to bear an affection

of love to men, in case he should hate incomparably the far greatest part of men, and that with the hatred of a reprobation from eternity, leaving them without all possibility of escaping eternal misery and torment, and this, when as at the same cost and charge which he hath been at for the saving of a few, he might have provided for the salvation of them all. For this they affirm who grant that Christ died sufficiently for all, but intentionally only for a few. Can we say that a king or prince is a lover of

consciences serve them to oppose in the present controversy, would seriously and calmly consider, whether that GREEK, that love to mankind, which the Scripture reporteth to be in God, be at all compossible or consistent with such a dismal design in reference unto men as that now represented.

Again, if God loveth only such a small number of men as the opinion which we oppose supposeth, why is not *φιλαγγελια*, the love of angels, as well as *φιλανθρωπία*, the love of

to say that which no way easeth the matter, or solveth the difficulty. First, because the angels, the elect angels, as the Scripture calleth them, are partakers with men in the gift of Jesus Christ given unto men, though not in that redemption from sin and misery which accrues unto men by him, unless haply it be by sympathy with their fellow-creatures in their joy and blessedness, yet otherwise, as appears from Col. 2:10, and other places; and besides is generally acknowledged by divines.

Secondly, one of the highest expressions I remember, whereby the happiness procured for men by the gift of Christ is set forth in the Scripture, is hut *ἰσαγγελία*, an equality with the angels, or likeness of condition with them, Luke 20:36. Therefore God's love to the angels that stand doth not fall short, at least to any such considerable degree, of the love which he beareth unto men that are saved. Therefore the reason why he is styled *φιλόανθρωπος*, a lover of men, not *φιλάγγελος*, a lover of

it is true he hath the same general and ultimate end, his glory, in all his works and administrations, one or other. But if the generality or far greatest part of men are bound to believe, and bound they are to believe it if it be a revealed truth, that God, in giving them health and peace and prosperity in the world, intends nothing but evil to them, a fuller cup of the wrath and vengeance which is to come, how can the "bountifulness and long-sufferance of God be said to lead men to repentance ?" which yet is

judge that God hath absolutely rejected him and will not save him, no, not upon his repentance? Therefore certainly God hath no intentions of evil, or of condemnation, or of increase of condemnation against the generality of men, no, nor yet against the worst or wickedest of men in those gracious vouchsafements of life, health, liberty, peace, food, raiment, and other the like temporal mercies and accommodations unto them.

Again, How can men look upon themselves as any

means of him, and by the tender and promise of forgiveness of sins unto men through him, upon the gracious terms of believing he might prevail with the world to love him, to think well and honourably of him; this doctrine seeks to put him out of his Christ again, at least in reference to any such glorious design as that of reconciling the world unto him; yea, and saith, in effect, unto the world itself, Believe him not, though he speaketh ever so graciously unto you: when he promiseth you life and salvation upon the

All the said hypotheses or premises, (as, viz. 1. That no man is in a possibility of being saved, but only those for whom Christ died; 2: That Christ died only for the elect; and, 3. That no unregenerate person hath any sufficient ground to believe that he is one of the elect,) are authentic and unquestionable, according to the known principles of our adversaries; therefore the conclusion specified must be admitted and owned by them. If they will admit the said conclusion, and judge it no way prejudicial, either to

action amount to no more than to the beating of the air: the hearts of men are not at all taken or wrought by them. Despair of salvation quencheth all thoughts, all endeavours, all desires of believing ; therefore, if an unregenerate person hath no sufficient ground of hope that he is one of those who are so much as in a possibility of being saved, he is not capable of any impressions from any ground or motive whatsoever to believing.

If it he here said, Though an unregenerate person

hath no sufficient ground of hope that he *is* one of God's elect, and consequently, that Christ died for him, yet he hath sufficient ground of hope that he *may be* one of these, and so that there is a possibility that Christ *may* have died for him; and upon the account of such a hope as this, he hath encouragement sufficient to apply himself to the means of believing; I answer,

1. That such a hope, which amounts only, or very little more than, to a bare apprehended possibility of obtaining, hath but a very

wherein men must put forth or give out themselves “with all their heart, and with all their soul, with all their mind, and with all their strength,” wherein they must labour, strive, watch, and pray continually, deny themselves, crucify the old man, &c., or otherwise not expect salvation.

2. Neither is it so clear a truth, especially according to the principles of those against whom we now argue, that an unregenerate man hath a sufficient ground of hope that he may be one of the elect; for if he

ground of hope in this kind, then have they all and every one the same; for no ground of difference between them in this case is imaginable. But how ill it accords with sundry the grounds and principles of our adversaries to affirm, That all the world, which, as John saith, lieth in wickedness, should have sufficient ground of hope that they are the elect of God, I leave to themselves to consider. Therefore certainly no unregenerate person, such especially as we lately described, hath any sufficient ground of

excitement whatsoever. The reason hereof hath been formerly given, where we showed and proved that such a hope which hath certainty of success or attainment absolutely and unconditionally insured unto it, is not of that kind of hope which is likely to engage much unto action; I here add, and have added, That the very genius or import of it is rather to render the subject of it unengageable unto action by other motives. And thus we clearly see, by a thorough examination and debate of the whole

business, that the doctrine of our present contest, and which denieth that Christ died for all men, leaveth no ground of hope for any person whatsoever in his natural condition, that he either is or may be one of those, who are in any possibility of being saved by Christ: and consequently must needs be a doctrine anti-evangelical in the highest. This for the opening and asserting of the philanthropy of God avouched in the Scriptures. "When the apostle writeth thus to the Hebrews, " For

if we sin willingly after we have received the knowledge of the truth there remaineth *no more sacrifice* for sins,” Heb. 10:26, he clearly supposeth, that they, for whose sins there was an expiatory sacrifice offered by Christ, may by apostasy and a rejection of the grace of this sacrifice, reduce themselves to such a condition, wherein they shall be incapable of any atonement for sin by any sacrifice whatsoever. For this clause, “there remaineth *no more sacrifice* for sins,” evidently

implieth, 1. That before the horrid sin of apostasy, here spoken of, the persons that fall into it, have, or had, a sacrifice for their sins, viz., for the expiation and atonement of them, which can be no other but the sacrifice of the death of Christ. In saying “there remaineth no more” (or, *οὐκ* in, not still, or, not further,) a sacrifice for sins, he must of necessity suppose, that till that sad alteration in their spiritual estate here described by their sinning wilfully after, &c. should befall them, they were partakers of a sacrifice

for the expiation of their sins, which, as hath been said, must needs be the death of Christ; otherwise they should have been in no worse case, as to matter of receiving benefit by the death or sacrifice of Christ, after their apostasy than before. 2. That upon, and after this alteration, they are, either absolutely and altogether excluded from a re-admission into their former grace, whereby they were partakers of the sacrifice of Christ, or at least that they stand upon terms of extreme difficulty ever to obtain such a

re-admission. So that this passage of Scripture befriendeth both the main doctrines avouched in the first part of our discourse, with pregnancy of confirmation, respectively. For, 1. It supposeth that Christ offered the sacrifice of himself for the sins of those, who very possibly may never be saved by him, and consequently, for all men without exception, for concerning those that come to be saved by him, there is no question. And 2. That they who have been partakers of the sacrifice of Christ, and hereby of the

grace and favour of God, in the pardon of their sins, may afterwards apostatise into such a condition wherein “there remains no more sacrifice for their sins, hut a certain looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation,” &c. Calvin himself knew not, it seems, how to manage the place, but with full comport of the sense given. “There is a great difference,” saith he upon the place, “between particular fellings and such a universal defection, whereby it cometh to pass that we *wholly fall away* from the grace of Christ.

But because this cannot befall any man, but him who is enlightened, therefore he saith, If we sin willingly after we have received the knowledge of the truth: as if he should say, Who shall willingly *cast away that grace which he had obtained*” A little after, “He (the apostle) denies that any sacrifice remains for those, who *depart from the death of Christ*, which is not done by any particular delinquency, but by a *casting away of faith totally*.” Doubtless, they who depart from the death

abide thee; for there is not a second sacrifice" for thee. We shall, upon the account of this chapter, produce only one brief passage of Scripture more, wherein the gracious intentions of God towards all men in point of salvation by the death of Christ, are like Solomon's "king upon his throne, against whom there is no rising up." The entire verse, wherein the words we mind are extant, runneth thus: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward,

all others that are partakers of the same election with us, “not willing that any,” viz. of these, the elect of his Father, “should perish, but that all” these “should come to repentance,” not any others. This sense of the place is commended by Estius, a Popish expositor; but we shall find Calvin leaning with the truth another way. “So, then, Peter,” saith Estius upon the place, “saith that the Lord dealeth patiently, *i. e.* delayeth his promised coming and judgment for the elect’s sake, that they might not perish, but, being

converted to repentance, be saved.”

This exposition he labours in the very fire to make to stand; but, as one said in another case, “Oportet aliquid intus esse,” an exposition that hath not truth in it, cannot be made to stand.

1. I would demand of this expositor, and of those who sense with him in the interpretation specified, why, or by what authority, they expound *τῇ ἡμῶς*, “towards us” the elect, rather than “towards us” believers? For if they will needs have the persons

here spoken unto to be considered by the apostle not in their natures or general capacities, viz. as they were men, but in some particular or special capacity wherein other men or all men did not partake with them, the capacity of saintship or of faith was as near at hand as that of election. For that the persons we speak of were saints and believers, is far less questionable than that they were elect, in their sense of the word election, who thus interpret. It is true what Estius allegeth to credit his exposition, that

this epistle was written to the same persons with the former, who are styled “elect,” 1 Pet. 1:2. But, 1. Whether his “elect” and the apostle’s “elect” be the same, is very questionable; unless, haply, the apostle puts it out of the question that they are not the same, by setting forth his “elect,” in the place cited, by such a description which will not agree with Estius’s “elect.” Estius, with the generality of divines amongst us, by his “elect” understands as well those that shall repent and believe hereafter, though they be at present “

sons of Belial,” and “to every good work reprobate,” as the apostle speaketh, as those who actually do believe: whereas Peter, in the place now mentioned, estimateth his *elect* by “the sanctification,” *i.e.* the actual sanctification “of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, according to the foreknowledge,” or pre-approbation, “of God;” *i. e.* as God approved and judged it meet, and consequently decreed from eternity to regulate his election of men in time. But

this only by the way for as to this Scripture, with others which treat of election, we shall, God favouring, speak more fully in due time. 2. Though the epistle was, as this author allegeth, written to the same persons with the former, who in the beginning of the said former epistle are termed “elect,” yet are these persons, in this very epistle, and much nearer to the place in hand, described or considered in their capacity of believing: “Simon Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained

him speak beneath the line of common sense. For, 1. The patience of God towards believers, who are in a present capacity of salvation, and according to the principles of our adversaries, out of all possibility of perishing, is no means of their non-perishing: neither need he be patient towards them in reference to any such end. 2. Neither have these need to “come to repentance” in order to their non-perishing, unless we shall suppose them in a possibility of a total loss of that faith that is in them,

neither have the “elect” any competent reason or ground to call or “count the long-suffering of the Lord” towards them “*salvation*,” (*i. e.* a signal means or opportunity of salvation to them,) in cash this their salvation might, and certainly should, have been obtained by them, or conferred on them, whether any such “long-suffering” had been vouchsafed unto them or no. If it be said, That as the salvation of the saints is infallibly decreed, so is it with the like infallibility decreed to be effected by

suppose. Therefore,

6, and lastly, When the apostle saith, that “the Lord is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, hut that all,” &c. his meaning must needs be, that he is long-suffering towards men, simply and indefinitely considered, or towards mankind ; and that this long-suffering of his towards them, proceeds out of a gracious and merciful disposition in him, which inclineth him not to will or desire the destruction of any person or soul of them, hut that they may generally, one and other, by

the advantage and opportunity of his goodness and long-sufferance towards them, be so overcome, as to repent unfeignedly of their sins, and turn unto him, that they may be saved. This interpretation,

1. Perfectly accords with the words, in their genuine, proper, and best known significations: whereas the other, as we lately proved, requires such a sense and signification of the two particles, *τινᾶς*, and *πάντας*, any and all, wherein they are not to be found throughout the

conceived to relate only to a few.

3. The sense of the words and place, which this interpretation exhibiteth, is more clearly parallel, and consistent with the mind of the Holy Ghost in other Scriptures, than that which is issued by the other. The Scripture no where, or at least no where so much, commendeth the patience or long-sufferance of God determinately towards his elect, or towards believers, in reference to their repentance or salvation, as towards the generality of men, and more especially

in his patience,
determinately towards
believers, or his elect, I find
the Scriptures silent
altogether.

4, and lastly, The sense of
the Scripture in hand
contended for is attested by
Mr. Calvin himself, over
and over. “The apostle,”
saith he, “checketh the too
much and preposterous
haste” that some made “by
another reason, viz.
because the Lord doth
therefore defer his coming,
that” hereby “he may invite
all mankind” or the whole
of mankind “unto
repentance.” A little after,

Ezek. 18., 1 Tim. 2:4, in all which, as we observed, the patience of God towards the generality of men, or towards sinful men, in order to their repentance and salvation hereupon, is clearly avouched: but not the least mention or intimation of any confinement or appropriation of this his patience, or intendments either of repentance or salvation therein, unto righteous men, or his elect. Therefore, questionless, this orthodox author also correspondeth with us in the interpretation given.

some things are objected. First, If the Lord Christ should defer his coming, or be patient towards all men without exception, in order to their repentance, that so they may not perish, he must defer it for ever, and so never come; inasmuch as that day will never come, wherein all men will repent.

To this I answer, That it is neither the sense of the text, nor yet of the interpretation given, that Christ should be patient unto all men, or defer his coming until all men without exception should

Another objection levied by some against the interpretation avouched, which yet in part falls in with the former, and is already fallen with it, is this: If Christ certainly knows, knoweth beforehand, that all men without exception will not repent, or will not be saved, how can it be thought that he should will, intend, or desire, that they should repent or that they should be saved? Doth any sober man will, or intend such a thing, which he certainly knows beforehand will never be effected ?

certainly foreknoweth, in such a sense as foreknowledge is appropriable unto him, of which formerly, will never come to pass. The reason is, because intentions, and acts of willing, which are properly and formally in men, and not in God, are not attributed unto God, in all, or every respect, or in respect of all circumstances, which relate unto them in men, but in respect only of such productions or effects, as they ordinarily produce in men. As for example, when men will or intend such or

salvation hereupon, And
chargeth them from heaven
to use these means
accordingly. And inasmuch
as he vouchsafeth this
sufficiency of means unto,
and imposeth the charge
we speak of upon, all men
without exception, he may
upon good grounds be said
to intend or will the
repentance and salvation of
all without exception. It is a
common saying amongst
all expositors of Scripture,
as well Protestant as
Popish, that “humana
transferuntur in Deum,
non affective, sed
effective:” *i. e.* human

passions or affections, are ascribed unto God, not by way of affect, but effect; *i.e.* not because the affections themselves are in him, but because there proceed such effects from him, which are like unto the effects that flow from such affections in men.

If it be here demanded; but if God certainly foreseeth, or foreknoweth that the means and opportunities which he vouchsafeth unto men, to bring them to repentance and so to salvation, will miscarry, and never take effect, but turn to so much

in the power of God to prevent the abuse of those good gifts of his we speak of in the receivers otherwise than now he doth prevent it, viz. by affording sufficient means unto them for the prevention of it; this, I say, neither was nor is, according to the sound principles both of reason and religion, any whit more in the power of God to do than it is in his power to lie, deceive, oppress, or do any other thing most unworthy of him. For he that is omnipotent must needs be omniprudent also ; and he that is omniprudent cannot

in the world able, *i. e.* at liberty in their wills and consciences, to act ten times more against the truth than for the truth. The true reason why neither of these men had any power, were not able to do those unworthy things which a thousand other men had power enough to do, was, because they had so much true wisdom in them above other men, which would not suffer them to do such unseemly and unworthy things. And generally we find it, that the more knowingly and prudently conscientious

whatsoever, whether men or angels. The apostle, as is well known, breaks forth in a holy kind of astonishment upon his contemplation of the wisdom and knowledge of God: “O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments;” meaning, that for matter of wisdom and knowledge by which they are ordered, managed, and administered, they are unsearchable, viz. to the bottom, or in respect of all the strains or variety of wisdom that are in them; “and his ways,” in respect

by God for the conversion of a man, viz. by a vision of the Lord Christ himself from heaven, in splendour and great glory, speaking with an audible voice unto him; although I know not whether it be necessary to suppose that the work of Paul's conversion was perfected, I mean, specifically perfected (for gradually, I presume it was not) by this vision only, or until Ananias, to whom the vision directed him, had made known unto him those things concerning the gospel which he did. But, whether his conversion was

them take either the right hand or the left, God will be no loser by them: his counsels and ends, of one kind or other, will be advanced howsoever. How that most serious and solemn profession and oath of God, that he delighteth not “in the death of the wicked,” or “of him that dieth,” Ezek. 18:32, and 33:11, is of good consistence with the apostles’ being the “sweet savour of Christ unto him in them that perish,” as also with that profession which himself maketh by Solomon unto wicked men,

constant course of his he simply the best and most agreeable to the rules of wisdom, for him ordinarily to follow. Upon this account the wise man informeth us, that “There is a time to kill, and a time to heal, a time to build up, and a time to pull down a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together,” Eccles. 3:2, &c. with several other instances of like import. When he saith, there is a time to do this and a time to do that which is contrary unto it, his meaning clearly is, that it is prudential and

been done more to my vineyard, hat I have not done in it ?” Isa. 5:4; he had not done any such thing in it, or for it, as he did afterwards for Paul: nor had he multiplied those miracles and great works of wonder, some particulars whereof he did work for them and amongst them, to such a number, or with such frequency, as by his power, simply considered, and without relation unto his wisdom, he was able to have done : and yet he might truly say and profess unto them, as his demand mentioned imports, that he

least and lowest sufficiency of means unto some men, as when he affordeth the greatest and richest of all unto others, that he did or doth what he could, or what he is able to do, as well for the one as for the other. And in such cases of difference as these, that admiration of the apostle, lately mentioned, is most seasonable and proper: “O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” Rom. 11:33. By his judgments, in

from day to day and from age to age take place in the world amongst the sons and daughters of men. Now, because neither men nor angels are capable of knowing or considering all that infinite and endless multitude and variety of actions, with all their circumstances respectively, which are done in the world, upon which, and according to the exigency of which, (not any one of them, from the greatest to the least, omitted or left out,) the providential administrations of God in the world, as well of justice

doth, and not otherwise, can possibly understand or comprehend the absolute exactness and accurateness of them; however he may apprehend somewhat, yea, much of them, I mean chiefly concerning the equity and righteousness of them.

Again, 2. These “judgments” and “ways” of God are “unsearchable and past finding out,” in respect of the “depths of the riches of that wisdom” which is in God, according unto which also they are all calculated and formed by him. For look as in a judge, who is to

administer justice, and to give sentence in the causes of men that are brought before him, there ought to be these two things, 1. A perfect knowledge of the respective cases wherein he is to give sentence, in all circumstances relating to them, before he doth give sentence; 2. A principle of wisdom, to weigh and ponder aright every of these cases in all their circumstances respectively, that so he may be enabled to form such a sentence, wherein every circumstance, great and small, relating to every

the world, hath so many unfathomable “depths” in it, is so “rich” above measure, so unconceivable, incomprehensible, in the discerning abilities and estimative worth of it, that those judiciary acts and ways which proceed from it, and are moulded and formed by the spirit and strength of it, are greater than all created understanding, above all comprehension, either by men or angels.

By the light of what hath been now argued, it fully appeareth, 1. That all such men who “turn the grace of

attributable unto him, that they will not prove saving unto them in the end, are yet arguments and pledges of as much grace, love, and mercy unto them, as they would or could be in case he had as certainly foreknown that they would be of a saving consequence unto them. 3. That God, his infinite wisdom considered, and the obligations thereof upon him, goeth as far, doth as much, to render the means of grace exhibited unto those who perish effectual to their salvation as is possible for him to do. 4,

and lastly, That that foreknowledge which is in God of the future abuse and miscarrying of the means of salvation, in those to whom they are exhibited or vouchsafed by him, doth not precede that act of his by which they are exhibited unto them, this being eternal, or from eternity, as well as that.

CHAPTER 17.

Declaring, in what sense the former passages of Scripture asserting the

universality of redemption by Christ, are, as to this point, to be understood ; and, consequently, in what sense the said doctrine of universal redemption is maintained in the present discourse.

ALTHOUGH an intelligent and observant reader may, from several passages occasionally inserted here and there in the precedure of this discourse, clearly enough perceive and understand in what sense, and with what explications and provisos, the said

devote one entire chapter unto his service herein.

Therefore,

1. To express our meaning in the said doctrine negatively, or rather our non-meaning, when, with the Scriptures, we affirm and teach that “Christ died for all men,” (*i. e.* for the redemption and salvation of “all men,” without exception of any; for we do not find in Scripture that he died for any for whose salvation he died not,) we do not mean or suppose either, 1, that he died sufficiently only for all men, (*i. e.* only that there

was price or merit enough in his death for the redemption of “all men;”) or, 2, that God, or himself, did every ways, or in every respect, as, viz. both antecedently and consequently intend the redemption or salvation of “all men,” in or by his death. Nor, 3, do we mean or suppose, in the said doctrine, that Christ died so, or upon such terms, for all men, that all men shall in time, or at last, be actually redeemed, (from sin and misery,) or eternally saved, by his death. Nor, 4, do we

suppose that God, or Christ as God, intends the salvation of all men, or of any man or men, by Christ's death, with intentions formally or properly so called, or such as are found in men. Nor, 5, do we mean or suppose, in the doctrine avouched, that Christ, by his death, purchased or procured the infusion or gift either of faith or repentance for all men, or, indeed, for any man, or numbers of men, personally considered. Nor, 6, and lastly, for our negative, that by his said, death he purchased or

consequently the redemption and salvation only of some, viz., those who shall believe. What it is to will or intend a thing antecedently, and what consequently, hath been shown formerly, Chap. 6. p. 169, and shall, God willing, be somewhat further opened in this chapter.

3. When we teach that Christ died for all men, we intend and mean that there is a possibility, yea, a fair and gracious possibility, for all men without exception, considered as men, without and before their voluntary obduration by actual

intend the salvation of all men by the death of Christ, and yet all men not be saved. Which opinion, I mean that all men shall be saved, as it hath no communion at all with the doctrine avouched in this discourse, so hath it every whit as little with the author's sense or judgment otherwise; who approveth the sentence of the Constantinopolitan Synod assembled under the Emperor Justinian, wherein this opinion, held, as it seems, by Origen with a surplusage of error joined with it, was condemned.

of God interposing to the contrary, this by the unchangeable law of Heaven is made unquenchable ; for the redoubling of the article GREEK, hath this import, which is likewise further confirmed by that which followeth, “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,” Mark 9:43, 44. These expressions, “dieth not, is not quenched,” though according to their precise grammatical import, they only deny the act, the one of dying, the other of quenching; yet according to

Scripture dialect, they deny also the very power or possibility of these acts. For there is nothing more frequent here than by the denial of the act to deny the power or possibility of a thing. Thus, Gen. 13:6, where our translation readeth “and the land was not *able* to bear them,” the original only saith, “and the land *did* not bear them,” as Mr. Ainsworth also translateth the place. So Prov. 24:7, where our last translation, respecting the original, hath it, “he *openeth not* his mouth in the gate,” our former

meet to make them easeless and endless. Upon this account also John the Baptist saith concerning Christ, that “he hath his fan in his hand, and will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner: but will burn up the chaff with *unquenchable fire*” Matt. 3:12. So likewise the apostle Paul clearly teacheth, that “the Lord Jesus shall show himself from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, rendering vengeance unto them that know not God, and that obey not the

whereunto, for affinity's sake, we may join that from the same pen: "For it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell: and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven," Col. 1:19, 20. From these passages laid together some judge it to be a very legitimate inference that "in the dispensation of the fulness of times," *i. e.* as they understand, in due time, though it be very long

projection of God by Jesus Christ here reported was, as the apostle expresseth it in the former place, ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τα πάντα Χριστῷ, i. e. to re-collect, reduce, or gather all things into one head by Christ, or in Christ, “both things in heaven and tilings on earth.” In the latter place, this design is said to be the. “reconciling of all things to himself by Christ, whether things on earth or things in heaven.” By “all things, whether in heaven or on earth,” by the joint consent of all interpreters, he means angels (holy

1 John 5: 4; Rev. 21:27, &c. The note of universality, πάντα, is better limited to that kind of subject which is properly capable of being headed by Christ, viz. as men and angels; than extended to all things simply and whatsoever; though such a sense as this be passable enough, and is embraced by some. When the apostle saith, that God's project or design was to recapitulate, or re-collect, or gather all things into or unto a head by Christ, both angels and men, he supposeth, 1. That both stood in need of a head, i. e.

angels not out of danger” (of losing.) & He supposeth further, that God did not intend the effecting of this his design by mere power or prerogative-wise; I mean so as to thrust or force Christ for a head either upon men or angels, nor yet to propound or offer him unto either for a head, in his mere naturals, if I may so speak, unwrought or uncontrived, but as a person orderly and duly fitted and prepared for such a relation, partly by assuming the human nature, or a body of flesh, partly by suffering death,

the death of the cross, in this body, and by his rising again from the dead. For by suffering death, especially the death of the cross, in the human nature, 1. He “made peace,” as the apostle expresseth it in the latter of the passages, *i. e.* he did that which was proper and effectual to “reconcile” men unto himself, and consequently unto angels also, who were at enmity with them, because of their enmity against God, yea, and unto and amongst themselves also. The death of Christ in the human nature was

upon this account a proper means to “reconcile” men unto God, (*i. e.*, to cause men to think holily and reverently of him, to love him, delight in him, &c., who by reason of the guilt of sin cleaving to them were apt before to hate him, as malefactors do their judge,) viz. because God, the sins of men being perfectly expiated and atoned thereby, freely offereth them, and upon their repentance assureth them, the pardon and forgiveness of their sins. See to this purpose, 2 Cor. 5:19, largely opened by us

uniting mutually under one and the same head. For as “two cannot walk together except they be agreed,” so neither can a plurality of persons kindly, and to the contentment either of themselves mutually, or of their head, incorporate into one and the same community, or walk in subjection under the same head. In which respect the reconcilment of men also to and amongst themselves, as, viz. of Jews unto Gentiles, and Gentiles unto Jews, who through diversity of religious opinions, and outward

with their notions and opinions hanging thereon, as also the idolatrous and superstitious rites and observations of the Gentiles, with, such conceits as they built hereon, which together made, as it were, a double “partition wall” between them; thus endeavouring, with a high hand of grace, to reduce both the one and the other of them into one and the same way of worshipping God, viz. that prescribed in the gospel, as also both to think and speak the same things concerning God, and so to

there might be no occasion of any such differences or distastes between them, but that they might be every ways meet to associate in one and the same spiritual body, and live sweetly together under one and the same Head, Jesus Christ. This then is one consideration wherein the death of Christ was necessary for the bringing about the glorious projection of God, I mean the “gathering of all things, whether in heaven or on earth,” under, or “into a head,” the same head, Christ.

Secondly, This death of Christ did accommodate the same design of God in another respect also, viz. as his voluntary subjection hereunto was an equitable foundation or consideration whereon God might, as he did, exalt him to the transcendent honour of that glorious headship and principality. “Wherefore,” saith the apostle, meaning because, “being in the form of God,” an estate wherein “he counted it no robbery,” as he had no reason to do, “to be equal with God, he made himself of no reputation ;

but humbled himself, and became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross in consideration of this wonderful humiliation and condescension, saith he, “God hath even highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name,” &c., Phil. 2:6—9, &c. Hence it is that the Scriptures still mention that glorious investiture of his which we speak of, headship over men and angels, as conferred upon him, not till after his rising again from the dead, “according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in

Christ, yet he hath “*given* him to his church,” and to his church only, consisting of men and angels, Col. 2:10, for a head. From whence it follows, 1. That neither men nor angels are necessitated or compelled by God to accept of Christ for their head, or in the relation of a head, though they be necessitated and compelled, with all other creatures, to subject to his will and pleasure in the exercise of his power. For that which is properly given to a man he is not forced to accept or take, but receives it freely. If men or angels be

should absolutely and without condition be actually invested with the benefit or blessing therein intended unto men; but that all such men without exception, and such only, who should believe in Christ, and freely submit unto him as a head, were they all without exception, or were they never so few or never so many, should actually partake of the said benefit. Therefore from neither of the two passages of Scripture cited towards the beginning of this chapter, can any such conclusion be evinced, That

all men without exception shall first or last be saved by Christ; because it cannot be evinced from either of them, that all men without exception will believe in him first or last, without which there is no salvation supposed in either of them. That neither of the places speak of any such reconcilment of all things unto God, which was actually to take place in any person of man, without the intervening of faith; nor yet again that either of them supposeth an absolute necessity, that all men or that any man should

the hope of the gospel,” &c. In this clause, “If ye continue in the faith grounded,” &c., he clearly supposeth, 1. That their present reconciliation unto God was obtained by the intervention of their faith; and, 2, That the perfecting and completing of it in glory did depend upon their perseverance in this faith unto the end. Which latter clearly implieth, that notwithstanding that reconciliation which God made of all things to himself by Christ, yet they might very possibly not have been reconciled unto

him or saved in the end. We formerly observed from Doctor Prideaux, “ That such conditional sayings, upon which admonitions, promises, or threatenings are built, do at least suppose something in possibility, however by virtue of their tenor and form they suppose nothing in being,” Chap. 12. p. 368.

2. For those words, in the former of the said places, “ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together all,” &c., they no ways import any such time yet to come, wherein all men should be

“Preaching the gospel, to be instant in season and out of season,” he doth not suppose or imply that there is any time out of season, or unseasonable, for the work; but the expression is emphatical, and imports that he need not be curious or solicitous to distinguish between times and times for the preaching of the gospel, as if there were any danger that he might preach it unseasonably, or at any time or times that were not fitting for such a work: meaning, that all times were seasonable for it. The two expressions, I

conceive, do somewhat parallel one the other. Yet, 2. There is a sense, and this not altogether improper, wherein the angels themselves may be looked upon as reconcilable unto God, yea, and as actually reconciled unto him by Christ. For, 1, As Calvin upon the place well observes, “The obedience which the angels perform unto God, is not in every respect so complete or absolute as to satisfy God, without a pacifier coming between.” And to this point he citeth that of Eliphaz in Job: “And his angels he

as well as they were before, or should have been without this confirmation by him, though it is true their condition is eminently bettered by that benefit of confirmation which they have by Christ, being hereby become out of danger, though not out of possibility of falling. But this by the way. Whether the present righteousness or obedience of angels be every ways so absolute as to satisfy God without any further satisfaction from another or no, in case without that confirmation which now they have

ἰΧιϛΧυΟα ἱῖς τον κόσμον,
ἵνα μαρτυρήσω i.e. for this
cause came I into the
world, that I should bear
witness unto the truth.”
Besides many the like. The
words *τις αὐτόν*, thus
understood, render the
sense of the place clearly
this: That God by the cross,
or death of Christ,
reconciled men on earth
and angels in heaven (viz.
between themselves, angels
being enemies unto men
because of their sinning
against God, which cause of
enmity being taken away by
the death of Christ, the
angels are become friends

to them, as we lately showed) not to himself, but *for himself, i. e.* for the effecting of his own gracious design in advancing Christ to be head unto both, being incorporated and united in the same body, which without the healing of the enmity or disaffection between them, could not have been, as we lately proved. This exposition differs not much from that of Augustin, in Cap. 61. 62. “*Enchirid. ad Laurentium.*” By what hath been argued upon the two passages, it appears, I presume,

the offence committed, and obligatory to the greater punishment. When the standers-by said to Paul, “Revilest thou God’s high priest?” Acts 23:3, they clearly intimated that the sin of reviling a person invested with so great a dignity as the high priesthood was signally demeritorious, and deserving exemplary punishment. Now, then, allowing proportionably for the incomprehensible and endless dignity, sovereignty, majesty of God, all in conjunction with eminency of worth and

goodness every ways commensurable to them, the injury which men offer unto him by voluntarily sinning against him and his laws, plainly appears to be of infinite demerit, and so binding over the sinner to an infinite punishment—infinite, I mean, either intensively, in respect of the nature or quality; or extensively, in respect of the duration of it. Now, the creature not being capable of suffering punishment infinite in the former consideration, the just severity of God imposeth upon him that

which is infinite in the latter. To speak or think slightly or lightly of the guilt or demerit of sin, or to look upon the punishment of hell fire as exceeding the proportion thereof, proceedeth either from a profound ignorance of the nature, majesty, infinite goodness and sweetness of God, or else from a profane neglect of an intense and due consideration of them.

2. The infinite purity of the Divine nature, and most perfect hatred of sin ruling and reigning therein, may well be conceived little less than to necessitate

apprehendeth a contrariety in it, either to its being or wellbeing, he riseth proportionably in his care and use of means for the prevention of it. The devil, it seems, had made observation of this principle in men, when he said, “Skin for skin, (or rather, skin after skin,) yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life,” Job 2:4. Death being, as Bildad styleth him, “the king of terrors,” Job 18:14; *i.e.* a thing which men generally are more afraid of than any thing, than all things in the world besides, engageth the

of eternal fire itself, upon the perpetrators of it. Any thing beneath this doth not answer the degree, or rather the degreeless infinity, of his hatred and abhorrency of sin.

3. The severity of that punishment of sin, which is now under consideration, will be found the more equitable and just, if we consider, on the one hand, how graciously and bountifully above measure God dealeth with men, in order to their escape and deliverance from it; and, on the other hand, how wilfully, how desperately,

and with what senseless irrationality, men must go to work and act to bring themselves into the suffering of it.

3.1. God hath discovered unto men, as by a vision of the noonday, the great deformity, foulness, filthiness, and most detestable abominableness of sin. The devil was never presented to any man's sight, mind, or imagination, in any such monstrous, uncouth, horrid, affrighting form or shape, as sin is exhibited to the judgments and consciences of men in the

confer the same, either formally or eminently, upon them, in ways of righteousness and of honour, if they will be persuaded to walk in them.

3.4. In case men, either through ignorance, in any degree hard to be overcome and expelled by coming to the knowledge of the truth, or through human frailty or incogitancy, shall be prevented with sin, or entangled in any sinful course, God hath, as it were, at the cost and charge of his Son Jesus Christ, in most bitter sorrows and sufferings, reared up a

keep it; it requires nothing, no act of obedience from men which is any ways ignoble, servile, base, or reflecting disparagement upon them. Just, *i. e.* tempered, framed, and fitted to such principles which God hath planted in the natures of men, so that there is nothing commanded in it which either crosseth or thwarteth any impression, disposition, or inclination, which is natural to them, or which God hath planted in them; or which requireth any other, any further strength, to perform it than

righteousness and
sinlessness of life and
conversation, in the hearts
and souls and consciences
of men.

3.8. To put himself into a
capacity of making such
promises as these, as also
of performing and making
them good, unto men, and
so generally of treating with
them so graciously as now
he doth, about the great
things of their peace, he
hath delivered up unto
death, the most bitter and
ignominious death of the
cross, his only begotten
Son, in whom his soul
greatly delighted. Hereby

he hath given all possible evidence and assurance unto men, with what eight and ardency of affection and desire he seeketh their salvation and eternal happiness, how transcendently great his love, how tender above measure his compassions are towards them.

3.9. and lastly. Over and besides all these gracious administrations and expressions of himself towards them, he vouchsafeth unto them the monitory, assisting, and strengthening presence of his infinite Spirit with

murderer should have his life taken from him; which, in truth and strictness of consideration, is a perpetual punishment, being a perpetual deprivation of that, which is, or was most dear to the offender. And generally the law of retaliation, which requireth “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” &c., is, I suppose, judged by all men most reasonable and equal. And yet this law, in the ordinary process and execution of it, inflicteth punishments very disproportionable, in respect of continuance, to

inconvenience thereby in the least, his estate in blessedness and glory being liable to no breach, or disaccommodation. This rather commends the equity of such his proceedings against sin and sinners, and clearly evinceth that what he doth in punishing the one and the other with that severity of punishment, which hath been oft mentioned, he doth not out of any spirit of revenge, properly so called, or as it is frequently found in men, nor out of any desire of self-reparations, but out of the most

and meaning herein formerly, yet we shall here, for the reader's satisfaction, briefly review that account, that so it may clearly appear, how and in what sense we affirm and hold, that God intended or intendeth the salvation of all men, in or by the death of Christ. The actions of men, and so of angels, and of any creature whatsoever, as well immanent as transient, inward as outward, not being really the same things with their respective natures, essences, or beings, have their peculiar and

infants, who admit of a peculiar consideration by themselves.)

This with the forementioned authors, I call his consequent will or intention. The former of these is not called his antecedent will or intention, either because it precedes the other in time or in eternity, or in worth or dignity, or the like: no precedence in any of these kinds, hath place amongst the decrees, wills, or intentions of God, which axe all equally eternal, equally honourable and worthy of him. But the

reason of this denomination is, because it is so ordered, and cometh to pass by Divine dispensation, that grace and means for the obtaining of salvation, are always in the first place vouchsafed unto men, before either salvation be actually conferred upon any man that believeth, or any thing penal, I mean, spiritually penal, or any ways tending either to obduration or condemnation, be inflicted upon unbelievers, and much more before actual destruction is brought

administrations of sundry kinds, first endeavoured, and sought with much tenderness and greatness of compassion, to put the Jews into an estate and condition of peace and safety, as well temporal as spiritual, (viz. by attempting to bring them to repentance and to a holy and humble walking with their God.) So that his intention, will, or desire of their peace and safety were antecedent, *i. e.* antecedently expressed or put in execution, to his intention or will concerning their destruction, which

till their abuse or neglect of the said addressments of grace. See upon this account, Revel. 2:21, 22, 2 Chron. 36:15—17, Isa. 5:2, 4, 5, Ezek. 16:6—8, &c. compared with verses 35, 36, &c. (not to mention other places of like consideration, without number,) all which are clear and pregnant for the justification of the said distinction of the will of God into antecedent and consequent, according to the premised explication. The antecedent will or intention of God is frequently in authors, and

unto them. So that the consequent intention or will of God is of like nature and consideration with the politic laws of men, which either assign rewards to those that shall deserve well of the state where they live, in such or such a way, or decree the infliction of punishment upon malefactors in several kinds. For as neither of these laws suppose any absolute or positive necessity that there will be any either so deserving as to have right of claim to the rewards promised, or so wicked as to incur the

punishments ordained by the said laws; so neither do the consequent intentions of God suppose a determinate necessity either that there will be any who shall have right to the great reward of salvation intended by him hereby unto those that shall believe perseveringly; or any that will incur damnation by final impenitency and unbelief, although, it is true, the Scriptures otherwise suppose and declare, 1. That there will be some saved, by believing unto the end. 2. That there will be

many condemned for their final impenitency and unbelief. 3. and lastly, That all persons of mankind, without exception, will either believe unto salvation, or remain impenitent to condemnation. But as the said politic laws of men are not therefore useless or impolitic, because they suppose no absolute necessity, either that there will be men found to deserve the rewards proposed in the one, or to incur the penalties imposed by the other, inasmuch as the former serve to excite

they intend or will any thing by virtue of such their intendments. So that to say that God willeth or intendeth one thing with one kind of will or intention, and another either contrary to it or differing from it, with another kind of will or intention, amounts to no more, truly interpreted, than to this, that some of his dispensations have a tendency towards the producing of such and such ends; and others, towards the producing of such and such other ends, either differing from them or

Upon this explication of intentions in God, this question is moved, 'Whether, according to the purport hereof, it may not be said that he intended the offering up of Isaac by death; because, 1. By his providence he furnished Abraham with all things sufficient and necessary hereunto. And, 2, Gave an express command unto him, that he should offer him accordingly. Now if he did not intend the oblation we speak of, which by his prohibition of it by an angel before it was performed, and by means whereof it

never came to be performed, he seemed not to have done, then cannot the said explication stand; nor are the intentions of God to be judged of by his vouchsafement of means proper for the production of an effect, no, not though he commands them to be used in order thereunto. To this I answer,

1. That the intention of God in commanding Abraham to offer up his son Isaac, having otherwise furnished him with means sufficient hereunto, was a thorough trial of Abraham's love and faith, not the actual

offering up of Isaac by death. This is evident from Gen. 22: 1, and Heb. 11:17, &c., compared.

2. In order to the accomplishment of this his intention, he commands Abraham to “Take his son, his only son Isaac, whom he loved, and to offer him for a burnt offering,” &c., Gen. 22:3. Therefore,

3. This command of God unto Abraham concerning the offering of his son, is none otherwise, nor in any other sense, to be understood as directed by God unto him, than as Abraham’s obedience or

disobedience to it was, or might be a sufficient trial either of the soundness or unsoundness of his faith and love towards God. So then,

4. The soundness and sincerity of Abraham's faith and love, being sufficiently tried and discovered by a discovery of his readiness and willingness to obey the said command of God, and to offer up his son, and this discovery being sufficiently made by that which Abraham did towards the offering up of his son by death, though he was not actually thus offered up by

effect is named to signify the means proper for the procurement of either, are familiar and frequent with the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures. An instance of the former we have, Psa. 22:26, in this clause, "They that seek the Lord shall praise him," *i. e.* they shall be graciously entreated by him, and receive good from him, and hereby be occasioned or provoked to praise him. So Deut. 10:17, "taking rewards" is put for doing unjustly, which commonly follows upon "taking rewards." So again, to "make the first-born,"

actual offering up of Isaac by death, might well be signified, and doubtless were signified, yea, and were all that was signified or meant by that command of God, so oft mentioned, unto Abraham, concerning the offering up his son. Therefore,

5. Look, what God commanded Abraham to do about the offering up of his son, that he really intended he should do, yea, and Abraham did it accordingly. He commanded Abraham to offer up his son ; and in such a sense as he

commanded, Abraham obeyed, the Scripture testifying thus of him, in these words, “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,” Heb. 11:17. Therefore certainly God commanded Abraham no other kind of offering up Isaac than that which Abraham performed, and what himself really intended that he should perform. Whether Abraham at first understood the command of God in such a sense as

concerning the ground and reason why intentions are attributed unto him, is no ways encumbered or disabled by the instance of God's command given unto Abraham concerning the offering up of Isaac, notwithstanding Isaac's non-oblation by death. There is nothing in this example to prove that God doth at any time vouchsafe means competent and proper for the bringing of any thing to pass, especially when he commands that these means be used accordingly, but that he truly and really intends, as

actual oblation of Isaac by death. In like manner, when he vouchsafeth means of salvation unto men, and commandeth the use of them accordingly, he cannot be supposed to divide or separate, in his intentions, between the use of these means and their proper end, salvation; there being no other end proper to be effected by the use of the means of salvation but salvation itself, or, at least, none but in conjunction with salvation. And certain it is, that there is no man of wisdom who intends the use of such means, which

CHAPTER 18.

Exhibiteth several grounds and reasons whereby the universality of redemption by Christ, or Christ's dying for all men, without exception, is demonstratively evicted.

ALTHOUGH Scripture authority be greater than all demonstration otherwise, for the eviction and confirmation of any doctrine or tenet in matter of religion, as simply and in itself, so also with those whose faith mainly or

and pressed upon the consciences of men in defence of such a doctrine, which grates or hears hard upon the common and clear dictates of that light which God hath planted in the souls of men, it is impossible hut that a considering man should much question such a sense or interpretation which is put upon the Scriptures in such a case. The reason hereof hath been given elsewhere. The premises considered, I judge it a matter of signal consequence in order to the securing the judgments and

these following :

If Christ died not for all men without exception, in the sense formerly declared, then is that great covenant of grace, which God hath made with the world, and ratified in his blood, made with unknown persons, and such who are no ways expressed in this covenant, neither by name nor by any other character or qualification by which they may, at least for a long time, be known or distinguished : But this great covenant we speak of is not struck, or made with unknown persons; I mean

with such who, for along time, if ever, neither can tell themselves whether they be the covenanted or no, nor are capable of any reasonable information hereof by others: Therefore, Christ died for all men, without exception.”

The reason of the former proposition, and the consequence therein, is this: because the elect, so called in the common notion of election, with whom only this covenant of grace is pretended to be made, and for whom only Christ is supposed to have

died, are persons no ways distinguishable from others, neither before, at all, and very hardly, if at all, after their regeneration and conversion unto God. That they are not at all discernible from others, before conversion, is evident from several places. “For we ourselves,” saith the apostle to Titus, meaning, who are now so much altered and changed by a work of grace and regeneration in us, “were sometimes,” viz., before our conversion, “foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and

pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another,” Tit. 3:3. Certainly, these are no appropriate or distinguishing characters of the elect, but such, which do evidently prove the elect, in the common signification of the word, before conversion, and the non-elect, to be indiscernible the one from the other, as well by themselves as by others. We shall not need to cite any more places for the proof of this. You may peruse the second chapter of the epistle to the

Judas to be a hypocrite or a traitor, no not after long acquaintance and converse with him; for then they would not have suspected every man himself, when Christ told them that there was one of them that would betray him. Nor did Philip know Simon Magus to be “in the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity,” when he baptized him; nor Paul, Demas, whilst he made him his companion. And how should others infallibly know who are elect and shall be saved, when, as the Lord Christ saith, that “many that are

first shall be last;" *i. e.* many that for a time march in the head of profession, and make a show of more zeal and forwardness in the ways of religion than other men, yet wheel off again to the world, and become like "salt which hath lost its savour, and is good for nothing but to be thrown upon the dunghill and trodden under foot by men." Again, 2. That such persons as we speak of, the elect, I mean such who shall actually be saved, at least a great part of them, are not able always, no, nor ordinarily, after the work of

men's names were known unto him when he made this covenant with the world. Look into the Scriptures; in all the covenants specified and recorded here, you will find the persons covenanted with either named or else so described that there is no place left for any doubt who they be. When Caleb made this covenant, proffered these terms: "He that smiteth Kiriath-Sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife," Josh. 15:16, it is and was easy enough to conceive who

they were with whom this covenant was made, viz. all the people or men that were with him, expressed in that pronoun “he,” which in the dialect of the Scripture hath the signification and force of the universal particle “whosoever;” as, “He that believeth,” i. e. whosoever believeth, “shall he saved,” Mark 16:16. So in that of our Saviour, John 6:37, “Him that cometh unto me,” i. e. whosoever cometh unto me, “I will in no wise cast out;” with many the like. A like covenant or offer of grace it

seems that Saul also made upon occasion of the affront which the giant-like Philistine, Goliath, put upon him and his whole army: “And it shall be that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father’s house free in Israel,” 1 Sam. 17:15. It is evident, likewise, in this covenant, who the persons were that were covenanted with upon the terms mentioned, viz. all the persons, without exception, in Saul’s army. I choose rather to give

mentioned in a covenant cannot be claimed or expected by any but only by the persons covenanted with, though they should perform the terms or conditions specified in the covenant ten times over. "If the trumpet," saith the apostle, "give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" 1 Cor. 14:8. In like manner, if the covenant of grace speaks unto persons unknown both to themselves and others, and holds forth life and salvation only unto such, both men and women, as

any; and consequently that the death or blood of Christ, which is the ground-work and foundation of this covenant, extendeth unto all. No covenant offereth any thing, insureth any thing, upon what terms soever, but only unto those that are covenanted with and comprehended in the covenant. When a man covenanteth with such or such a workman, to give him so much or so much, as suppose five or ten shillings by the day, this covenant doth not bind him to give the like wages to another.

What is the reason why the covenant of grace, or the gospel, doth not offer or insure grace and salvation to the devils, as well as to all manner of men whatsoever upon their believing? Doubtless, because the devils are not within the number of the covenanted ones, nor of those unto whom grace and mercy were intended upon the terms of the gospel: and this because the death of Christ, which is the ground of the covenant, doth not in the atoning virtue of it reach unto them; the sphere of whose activity (in

believe, and thou shalt have thy sins forgiven, and be saved. Therefore the covenant made with Christ, if any such thing be or were, is altogether irrelative to our present argument. Nor doth that of the apostle, Gal. 3:16, prove that Christ, in a personal consideration, is the only person, or, indeed, any person at all, with whom the evangelical covenant is made. The tenor of the place is this: “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many : but as of one, and

election: but howsoever, such a process of arguing as this is very serviceable for the confirmation of a truth in opposition to an error ; and the apostle Paul himself sometimes useth it in a like case, as 1 Cor. 15:29. The major proposition in this last argument, standeth upon this ground, that there was no need that Christ should die for the holy or elect angels. I suppose this will not be denied or doubted of by any; but however it is clearly enough asserted by the apostle, in that saying, of his, Gal. 2:21, “I do not

decreed unto men in their election, without any consideration had of Christ's dying for them, or their believing in him ?

If it be here said, that they who hold election in the most absolute and peremptory way, do not say or hold that God intends actually to confer remission of sins, or eternal life, upon the elect, otherwise than for and through the satisfaction made by Christ for them in his death, though they hold that he intends, without any respect had to the consideration of Christ's

death, actually to confer them upon them; they exclude the satisfaction of Christ from having any thing to do in God's purpose of election, not from having any thing to do in the execution of this his purpose; here they acknowledge it to have much to do, to be upon the matter all in all. To this we answer,

That this distinction, or explication of the opinion, doth no ways relieve it, hut rather burdens it more and more. For,

1. Certain it is, that God doth not purpose or project

one way, and act or execute in another: but his executions do exactly answer the tenor, purport, and form of his purposes or intentions. Men who are subject to oversights, and consequently to repentance, may, and many times do, vary from their model or platform, when, they come to action, because some better thing, it may be, hath come in their way, than they thought upon in the first projection of their work. But nothing can come in God's way either more satisfactory, or better

yea, and to their ingrafting into him by believing; and that he never purposed salvation unto any, without interesting the death of Christ in his intentions in this kind, as well as in his executions of what he thus intends.

2. If God might intend and purpose salvation unto men, without the consideration of the death of Christ, certainly he may as well actually confer and give this salvation without any respect had thereunto. For this is a general and plain rule, that what a man may lawfully will or intend

to do, without such or such a consideration, he may as lawfully act or do it without this consideration. For there is every whit as much required to justify a man in his will or purpose of doing a thing, as to justify him in his act or deed according to this will. Certainly, that which a man may lawfully will or purpose, he may lawfully do. In like manner, if God might lawfully—I mean, with the consistence of his wisdom and justice—purpose, will, or decree forgiveness of sins and salvation unto men, without considering them

as believers in Christ, he may as well actually confer these things upon them without any such consideration; and if so, the death of Christ is no ways necessary either to justify or commend either the justice or the wisdom of God in the actual justification or salvation of men. So that evident it is, that the doctrine of election, as it is ordinarily, entertained amongst us, doth abrogate the grace of God in Christ, and makes his death to be in vain. But the Scripture teacheth this doctrine upon other terms,

and maketh Christ, *i. e.* the consideration of Christ, and of faith in him, the foundation of election, and that upon which God raised, as it were, and built it.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” saith the apostle, “who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places” or things “in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy,” &c. Eph. 1:3, 4. Observe these words, “according as he hath

chosen us in him.” Here are two things very considerable as to our purpose, in these words. The first lies in that word, *καθώς*, “according as,” or, even as. “Who hath blessed us,” *i. e.* actually and *de facto* blessed us “with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ, according as,” or, even as “he hath chosen us.” This clearly shows that God’s actings, his actual and present dispensations, are adequately and exactly conformable unto his purposes or projections. God, saith the apostle to

in Christ ?” First, I suppose the apostle here speaks, not of the act, but of the purpose or decree of election or choosing. So the sense of the words, “according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world,” is this: according to that model, platform, or purpose of election, which, upon the happy advantage or opportunity he had of his Christ, and that most gracious and wise contrivement of him in order to such a purpose which was before him, he framed and made within

himself from the days of eternity, or before the “foundation of the world.” The purposes or intentions of God concerning such and such acts or dispensations, are very usually in Scripture expressed by the names of the acts or dispensations themselves, as likewise the purposes or intentions of men are after the same manner. Thus, Rom. 8:30, God is said to have glorified those whom he intends or hath decreed to glorify. Thus, also, 2 Tim. 1:9, and again, Tit. iii. 5, he is said to have saved those who were not actually

beloved Eph. 1:6; *i. e.* hath made us dear, and near, and precious to himself, by means of the death, satisfaction, and atonement made by his beloved Son for us. By the way, if the grace of God itself—and that in the glory of it, in which consideration the apostle here speaks of it—doth no other ways, upon no other terms, render us accepted with him, but only in “and through his beloved,” viz. as having made our peace by the atonement of his death for us, then were we not so highly accepted with

him through any purpose of election, (especially if we shall conceive this purpose of election to have been conceived in God before, and without all consideration of the death of Christ,) as the common notion of election suggesteth. So, then, God is said to have purposed our election or choosing in Christ, because his purpose was to separate, elect, and choose those who should believe in Christ, for his sake in whom they believe, to salvation. This interpretation might be much cleared and

confirmed by the opening of these words, which we had not long since in hand, Rom. 9:11: “ That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.” The purpose of God according to election, *i. e.* that purpose, counsel, or decree of God, according unto which, or in conformity whereunto he ordereth and manageth his election of persons in time, is here described, 1. Negatively, “not of works.” 2. Affirmatively, in these words, “but of him that calleth.” When the apostle

denies “ the purpose of God according to election” to be of works, his meaning clearly is, that God did not purpose to elect, separate, or choose those men to eternal life, who should seek their justification by the works of the law. Again, when he affirmeth this purpose of God according to election to be of him that calleth, (meaning, of God himself, who calleth men to justification and salvation,) his meaning as clearly is, that the tenor of God’s purpose, according unto which he means to elect and choose men and

women to eternal life, is this ; viz. to make choice of those for this blessed end and purpose, who shall believe in his Son Jesus Christ, or seek their justification by faith. This purpose is said to be “of him that calleth,” in opposition to a being “of works;” because a purpose according to election, which should be of works, is the purpose of them that are called, viz. men; they conceive and think, that God should purpose and intend to choose those only unto life, who should be diligent observers of the

law, and seek their justification that way : but now “ the purpose of God according to election,” is not formed or shaped according to the sense or notion of those that are called, who generally pitch upon works, but according to the sense and mind of God himself, who calleth ; who, as we know, hath declined works for such a purpose, and hath chosen faith. So that the apostle’s meaning in this antithesis, “not of works, but of him that calleth,” is plainly this, “not of works,” but of faith; faith and works being

famous antagonists or competitors in the writings of this apostle for justification, the one as set up by God, the other by men. The same interpretation of the phrase, “who hath chosen us in Christ,” may be yet further strengthened by that in Peter. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,” 1 Pet. 1:2. First, he saluteth them as persons elect, or chosen,

Spirit, &c. is that very estate wherein what person or persons of men soever should at any time be found, God in his eternal counsel judged it meet to confer the honourable title of “elect,” or chosen, together with the grace and privilege of justification, upon them. So that to choose us in Christ, doth not signify to choose us personally considered with Christ, or in the same act of election wherein or wherewith Christ was chosen, or the like, but to intend, purpose, or decree to choose us, as being, or

when we should be in Christ by believing. Having once obtained this being, a being in Christ by faith, we may truly and in good propriety of speaking be said to be chosen, by means or by virtue of that purpose or decree of election which was in God “before the foundations of the world” whereby he decreed to choose all those unto salvation, how many or how few soever they should prove, who should at any time be found in Christ by faith. In such a sense, Othniel, having smitten and taken Kirjath-Sepher,

are not all men bound to believe in him or on him for salvation, or as a Saviour: But all men are bound to believe on him for salvation: Ergo. The reason of the major proposition is clearly this: no man is bound to lay out his silver for that which is not bread; nor to stay himself, with any confidence or assurance, upon any person whatsoever, for help or succour in any kind, concerning whom he knoweth not whether he hath wherewith to help him or no. Therefore, except all men had a sufficient

but we grant that in this sense, viz. sufficiently, he did die for all men. And this is a sufficient ground to oblige all men to believe on him for salvation, though he died not intentionally for them. To this I answer,

1. By demanding what men mean in saying that Christ died sufficiently for all men, in opposition to his dying intentionally for them? If they say, they mean that the death of Christ, simply and in itself considered, was or is sufficient to redeem and save all men, as well as those who are redeemed

If they reply and say, That that remainder of the value and price of the death of Christ, though it was not intended by God for the salvation of those who are not actually redeemed by him, yet was intended for their condemnation, and so not lost; I answer, that this is yet worse and more unreasonable than the other. For, 1. Might not men as reasonably say, that God made the sun, and put him into the midst of the firmament of heaven, to bring night and darkness upon the world, as that he gave his Son Jesus Christ

unto death for the
condemnation of the
world? “For God sent not
his Son,” saith Christ
himself, “into the world to
condemn the world, but
that the world through him
should be saved,” John
3:17. And elsewhere, “I
came not to judge the
world, but to save the
world,” John 12:47. And
John the Baptist clearly
expresseth the end and
intent of Christ’s death,
“Behold the Lamb of God,
that taketh away the sin of
the world,” John 1:29. Men
may as well say that the end
and intent of the sacrifices

offered up by the priests under the law, was not to make atonement for men, or to purge them, but to bring more guilt upon them, as say that the intent of Christ in sacrificing himself was not to save, but condemn men. 2. It is not the manner of God, nor is it agreeable either with his wisdom or his goodness to make things proper and fitting for the bringing to pass of good and gracious ends, and then to consign them over to the effecting of ends of a quite contrary nature and import, as, *v. g.* to create wholesome and

savoury meats, which are apt and proper to nourish and make the lives of men comfortable to them, and to design these, being thus created, to the destruction or discomfort of the lives of men. Indeed, when men abuse their tables, and are unthankful to him that spread them for them, it is agreeable with his wisdom, and no ways disagreeing with his goodness, to make them to become snares unto them. And in this sense only are all those places and expressions in the Scriptures to be understood where any

greatest unmercifulness and unworthiness. In like manner do they, who acknowledge the death of Christ sufficient for all, and yet affirm it to be given or intended by God only to some few, charge him, and that upon terms of much unworthiness and very dishonourable to him, to evacuate or make of no use or effect the far greatest part of this death, there being so many millions of souls before him in the utmost extremity of misery, to whom it might, and that with double and treble honour both to his wisdom

and goodness, be disposed. Therefore, certainly, if the death of Christ was sufficient for all, it was intended by God for all. But,

2. Suppose it were granted that Christ died sufficiently for all, yet unless it be granted withal, that he died intentionally for all, the sufficiency of his death is no sufficient ground for all men, nor indeed for any man, to believe on him, or to cast themselves upon him, for salvation. Nabal was a rich man, and had sufficient to have relieved David and his

men in their necessity, and his sheep- shearers too. But yet David and his men had no sufficient ground to depend upon him for relief in their extremity; nor is it like they would have repaired to him for relief, if they had known his churlish and inhuman disposition before. In like manner that opinion which represents God as minding only, and intending the salvation of a few peculiarly relating to him by a purpose of election, in the death of Christ, but altogether averse from so much as hearing of the

saving of all others thereby, what doth it else but dissolve and loose all bonds of engagement or obligation upon men, to believe on Christ, or on God through Christ for salvation? For who is bound to seek water from a flint, or to repair to thorns in hope to gather grapes from them? For they who deny that God intendeth the salvation of all men by Christ, represent him to the generality of men upon no better terms of comparison, than of a flint to him that wanteth water, and of thorns to him whose soul

and redemption to be offered unto all flesh, unto all persons without exception, must needs be most unlike unto him, and unworthy of him, yea, and have a direct tendency to make him that which a reverential sense of his majesty makes hard to be uttered, the hatred and abhorring of all his creatures. David, to present his hollow-hearted and treacherous friends hateful both to God and men, describes them thus; “The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his mouth: his

would occasion the same reflection of dishonour upon him; yea, and doubtless would comfort and ease the damned in hell, if ever the knowledge of it should come amongst them. But this for the proof of the major proposition in the argument propounded; If Christ died not for all men, then are not all men hound to believe on him for salvation.

The minor, I conceive, needs little proof, being this: But all men are hound to believe on him for salvation. However the truth of this proposition is

believe on Christ, (which is indeed sufficient to prove that they are bound to believe on him,) so doth he severely threaten all those that shall not believe on him. “But he that believeth not, shall be damned,” Mark 16:16. The Scriptures likewise abound with passages of this import: a first-fruits whereof are here presented, John 8:24; 3:36; Acts 3:23.

Thirdly, As God commandeth all men to believe on Christ and threateneth all with death, which shall not believe; so he promiseth life and

salvation unto all without exception, who shall believe on him. This assertion, I conceive, is no man's question, the Scriptures being so particular and express in the frequent delivery of it, John 3:16; 11:25, 26 ; 1 Pet. 2:6.

Fourthly, and lastly, As God commandeth all men to believe on Christ; threateneth all with death, who shall not believe; promiseth life and salvation, unto all who shall believe; so doth he encourage all to believe on him; my meaning is, he

tendereth and suggesteth reasons and motives of an encouraging and sweetly-persuading nature and import unto men to believe. For otherwise the commands and promises of God made unto those who shall believe, are grand encouragements (in a large acception of the word) unto men to believe; and his threatenings are more engaging to the servile tempers and dispositions of men to believe, than any encouragements whatsoever. But my meaning in the particular in hand is this; that besides

showing mercy, as Mic. 7:18; Ezek. 33:11, &c.; sometimes with his faithfulness, as Heb. 10:23; 1 Cor. 10:13, &c.; sometimes with his oath, for their greater security in his promises, as Heb. 6:17, 18; Luke 1:72, 73; otherwhile, with his desire of their salvation, as 1 Tim. 2:4; Ezek. 33:11; otherwhile again, with the grief and trouble of his soul at their stubborn courses, and that because they are and will be destructive unto them, as Ezek. 18:31 ; Jer. 44:4; sometimes with the abundant provision he hath

the thought and saying only of such a man, who is resolved to stand by his own thoughts and sayings, against any light or evidence of truth whatsoever.

A fourth argument, evincing the death of Christ for all men, is this: If God really and unfeignedly intends or desires the salvation of those who perish, then he really intended the death of Christ for all men. This proposition we shall not need to prove, but only by this brief account. All men (without exception) are

either such who are saved, or such who perish; and that God really intended the death of Christ, for those that are saved, is no man's doubt or contest. Therefore if he really intended the salvation of those also who perish in or by the death of Christ, he intended this death of Christ for all. This proposition then being undeniable, I proceed and assume thus: But God really and unfeignedly intends or desires the salvation of those who perish: Therefore he intended the death of

passages of such an import as we speak of. “O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever,” Deut. 5:29, (saith the Lord himself concerning the great body of the children of Israel, whose carcasses soon after “fell in the wilderness” through unbelief, as the apostle speaketh.) So again by David, “O that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in

my ways, I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries,” &c. Psal. 81:13, 14. Thus the Lord speaks concerning those, “whom” as he had immediately before said, “he had given up to their own hearts’ lusts, and who walked in their own counsels.” That expression also of the Lord in Isaiah is of the same character. “Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee

do not this abominable thing that I hate. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn incense unto other gods.” The latter place is in the New Testament. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate,” Matt, 23:37, 38. Upon the former of these

import. Now to say that God should profess and express himself unto men and women with so much vehemency and patheticalness of affection, as these gestures, phrases, and expressions (our chiefest adversaries themselves being judges) imply, spreading forth his hands all the day long, endeavouring to gather people with as much care and tenderness as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, crying out, Oh, do not this abominable thing, &c., and yet have no desire at all, no

heavenly Father, who deny that Christ died for all men, we should be the first-born children of hypocrisy, and the most notorious dissemblers under heaven, many degrees worse than those whom James speaks of with reproof; who say “to a brother or sister, naked and destitute of daily food, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things that are needful for the body,” James 2:15, 16. For though such merciful ones as these do their poor brethren and sisters little good with their

intentions of doing them the greatest mischief they can imagine.

That which is wont to be excepted against this argument is so empty, except it be of contumely and dishonour unto God, that it neither deserves consideration nor confutation; and I believe all that can be excepted against it is of very little more weight. Some, as to the Scriptures cited for the confirmation of the argument with their fellows, wherein God (as we heard) professeth with so much earnestness the

professions “in the inward parts” of men, Psal. 51:6, and commands them to “love, not in word, or in tongue, but in deed and in truth,” 1 John 3:18, is himself fully commensurable in heart and soul, in the most real purposes and intentions that can be conceived, with all that goeth out of his lips. His mouth is not so wide opened unto the world, but that his heart is enlarged accordingly; nor is he at any hand to be judged like unto him whom David brandeth with this character of wickedness,

“The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords,” Psal. 45:21. Such a simulation or dissembling as we now speak of, and which some most unworthily attribute unto God, is by the very light of nature execrable and accursed. Homer puts these words into the mouth of his Achilles:

To me he is abhorred like
death,
Whose heart accords not

with his breath.

But this subterfuge of *simulatio sancta* is, it seems, so broadly obnoxious, that the greatest part of those who wish themselves safe from the prementioned Scriptures, are afraid or ashamed to trust to it. Therefore,

2. Some others of them attempt an escape by the new, but dead way of this distinction. God, say they, wisheth the peace and salvation of those that perish, voluntate approbativa, with or

the destruction of those who perish contrary to their salvation? Therefore, if God approveth of their salvation, and yet peremptorily decreeth their condemnation, (whether positively or permissively only, as these men count permission, is not material, as we formerly observed,) doth he not decree that from eternity which his soul hateth or abhorreth, or, which is the same, which is contrary to his will of approbation ? And who ever decreed such a thing which is contrary to what he approveth, taketh

accord to his will of approbation. 2. When the said distinction teacheth us that God doth not will the salvation of those that perish voluntate efficaci, with his efficacious or effectual will, 1 would gladly know what it meaneth by this efficacious will of God. Certainly he willeth the salvation of these men with a will efficacious to a degree, yea, to a very considerable and great degree; with a will, I mean, exerting itself upon such terms in order to the promoting, furthering, and procuring their salvation,

said not to be able to “do more” than what he actually doth. to promote the salvation even of those who perish, hath been formerly opened. Yea, the most learned abettors of that doctrine which we now oppose, generally grant that God vouchsafeth means of salvation, yea, sometimes means very rich and powerful in this kind, unto those who in the event are not saved. Doubtless, such dispensations as these argue a will in God some ways, and in some measure, operative and efficacious in order to the

salvation of such men,
which is more than a will of
mere approbation. If by the
efficacious will of God, the
said distinction meaneth
such a will which acteth
irresistibly, or
necessitatingly, in order to
the saving of men, and that
God with such a will as this
doth not will the salvation
of any of those who perish;
my answer is, I. That if this
be meant particularly of the
initial or first applications
made by God unto such
men, that will of his from
which these proceed may,
in a sense, be said to act
irresistibly and

hath torment, but only of
care that hath conscience,
as hath been shown
formerly. But,

3. Concerning those who
inform us that the
Scriptures specified,
wherein God presenteth
himself, as affectionately
wishing and desiring the
salvation even of those who
perish, are figurative, and
to be understood
anthropopathetically,
conceiving that by saying
thus, they shake off the
argument built upon these
Scriptures against them,
the truth is that their
information in this kind is

steady and good, but their conceit upon it weak and worthless. For what though a Scripture passage be figurative, and contains in it an anthropopathy, one or more, is it therefore non-significative ? or doth it hold forth nothing of a spiritual import to the judgments and understandings of men for their edification? When God saith of himself, “If any man draw back, *my soul* shall have no pleasure in him,” Heb. 10:38; so again when he saith, “All those things hath *mine hand* made,” Isa. 66:2; so

when he is said to have given unto “Moses two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with *the finger* of God,” Exod. 31:18, with others more of like character, without number, are such sayings as these barbarians unto us, or like so many trumpets giving an uncertain sound ? or are they not as significant and expressive, as full of edification and instruction in the knowledge of God, as other sayings in the same volume with them ? Or could the same subject or matter of truth, which they hold forth, have been

delivered with more grace,
or with better advantage to
the understandings of men,
in other terms or forms of
expression than those
specified ? Yea, the truth is
that very little, if any thing
at all, concerning God, can
be conveyed by words unto
the minds and
understandings of men, but
by expressions which are
figurative, the reason
whereof hath, I remember,
been formerly observed by
us. And for the Scriptures,
questionless there is in
them more of the
knowledge of God, and of
his attributes, taught by

anthropopathies, and that kind of dialect, which borroweth things proper unto men to make known unto us things proper unto God, than by all other kinds of phrases or expressions whatsoever. Now then this I would demand of those who of the anthropopathies found in the Scriptures under present consideration, think to make shields and bucklers against the dint and force of the argument drawn from them, I would, I say, willingly demand of these men, what other sense, or what other matter of

salve their opinion of Christ's non-dying for those whose salvation God professeth with so much seriousness and solemnity in the passages in hand that he desireth, without charging him with hypocrisy, apply this plaster, viz. that in this place God expresseth himself, *pro captu humano*, *i. e.* with a condescension to human capacity, these men, I say, spin the same thread of vanity with the former. For be it granted, that God in the said passages condescends to the infirm and weak

apprehensions of men, and teacheth them mysteries, as they are able to hear and understand, doth it follow from hence, that therefore he teacheth them nothing at all, speaks nothing at all to their understandings in these places? If it be granted that in them he speaks any thing at all to the understandings of men, I demand, as lately, what can it else be, but that he truly, really, cordially, affectionately, wisheth, willeth, desireth, (in such a sense as he truly, really, cordially, affectionately, wisheth, willeth, desireth

or else that he intends and desires their salvation otherwise than by Christ's death.

A fifth demonstration of the doctrine asserted. "That doctrine which directly tends to separate and divide between the creature and his Creator blessed for ever, or to create and raise jealousies and hard thoughts in the former against the latter, cannot be evangelical or truth : But such is the doctrine which denieth that Christ died for all men without exception: Ergo." The major proposition in this

argument carrieth a sufficiency of light in it for the manifestation of its own truth. The clear and known project and intent of the gospel is "to reconcile all things both in heaven and on earth into one," as we lately heard from the apostle; to slay and destroy that enmity which is so apt to arise and work in the minds and thoughts of men against God, through a consciousness of their sinful lives and ways, in conjunction with those strong impressions upon their conscience of his infinite holiness and

or delight in him that made him, in case he either knows, or otherwise hath strong grounds of jealousy and fear, that before he made him, and without any offence taken at, or respect had unto, any of his future sins, or unworthy carriages in the least, he so far hated and abominated him, as to resolve, against all mediation whatsoever, to cast him out of his sight, to devote and doom him to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire? Or doth not that doctrine, which denieth that God intended the death of Christ for the

this affection, as a reprobating of them from eternity. This demonstration is so pregnant of proof and conviction, that certain I am nothing can with any strength, scarce with any face of reason, be alleged against it. But meet it is that the poor should be heard in his cause, as well as the rich. Therefore,

1. To the argument now urged, it may be objected, that the doctrine which affirmeth that Christ died only for the elect, and not for all men in general, hath no such tendency or

same destruction or punishment, and this of the same numbers of men with the other, inasmuch as it granteth or supposeth that God from eternity unchangeably purposed the eternal destruction of all those, without exception, that shall remain finally impenitent and unbelieving, which are the same men, both for numbers and personality, which the other doctrine, so much opposed by us, presenteth as the objects of those unalterable reprobating purposes or intendments of his from

eternity; and consequently, that the one doctrine represented God as little lovely or desirable unto his creature as the other; To this I answer,

1. Though the doctrine asserted by us supposed such a decree in God. from eternity whereby all persons that should remain finally impenitent and unbelieving are decreed or adjudged unto the vengeance of eternal fire, yet doth it not adjudge to this account any such who are either through defect of years, as children dying infants, or defectiveness in

death, this is but the subordinate intention or end of it, but to prevent the perpetration of these crimes in all that live under this law, and consequently, their suffering of death for them. Much less is it any part of the intent of such a law to make any person or persons, by name, traitors, murderers, or the like, that so they may be cut off by death. In like manner, we judge and teach, that the sovereign and primary intent of this decree of God, “he,” *i. e.* whosoever “believeth not, shall be damned,” Mark 16:16,—

unexcusably negligent and careless in a matter of so transcendent a concernment unto them, may, and most certainly shall, be saved. The provision which God hath made, by the death of Christ, for the salvation of all, is so redundantly plentiful that there is no place or possibility left for the miscarrying of any man, but by a neglect of it only. “How shall we escape,” saith the apostle, “if we *neglect* so great a salvation,” &c. Heb. 2:3, clearly implying, that if they did not neglect it, but

seriously and diligently mind and look after it, they should escape, (viz., the wrath of God and the vengeance of hell fire,) and, consequently, be saved. Otherwise, in case their regarding or esteeming of this salvation should be accompanied with the same danger or destruction which their neglect should bring upon them, the apostle might as well, or, indeed, rather, have said, “How shall we escape,” whether we “neglect this great salvation,” or no?

2. There is no comparison, for matter of

millions of millions of precious souls to inevitable damnation, any ways considerable, in point of grace, with that great and blessed opportunity which, by the former provision, is put into the hand of the world, and of every person of mankind, without exception, to escape the vengeance which is to come, if they please, and withal to be crowned with an incorruptible crown of glory; especially, if it be considered withal, that he that makes such a provision for a few, had wherewithal in abundance, and this

men, in case they have means and opportunity to relieve the necessities of those that are in misery, and neglect to do it, the imputation and charge of unmercifulness justly lieth, because they are under a law in this behalf. So that the grace of God, in his merciful provision for the salvation of a few, is no ways obscured or disparaged by his nonproviding for all. To all this I answer,

1. That neither the argument yet in hand, nor the answer given to the former objection,

always magnified his promise, by giving real, full, and seasonable performance thereunto: he passeth not for the vailing or obscuring any other part of his name, so that his truth and faithfulness in his word may be advanced. 2. As he hath no liberty, as some men count liberty, of showing or denying mercy, contrary to his word, so neither hath he any liberty of acting in. one kind or other, and consequently neither of showing or denying mercy, in opposition to his wisdom, which is, as it were, the

for them to pretend a liberty in him of denying mercy to whom he pleaseth, by way of proof or confirmation of their opinion.

4. Though it would have been no act of unmercifulness in God, but of districtness of justice only, in case no provision had been made by him, either by the death of Christ or otherwise, for the salvation of any, yet such an act as this would not have rendered him so gracious and lovely in the eyes of his creature, or so attractive of their hearts

discourse begins to swell to an unacceptable bulk already, we shall decline the penetration of it at present; only offering to consideration, whether their prodigious unnaturalness, or height of misdemeanor in sinning, above what is to be found in the sin of men, either as sinning in Adam, or by actual and personal perpetrations (ordinarily), may not upon a very reasonable account be deemed the cause or reason why it was not honourable for God, or of any good consistence with his

I conceive Scripture evidence more pregnant and clear for it. To say that the will of a creature should and will remain unchanged in that which is good, is no elevation of it above that sphere of excellency which is made for it to move in; but to affirm that at any time it is, or ever will be, thus *unchangeable*, is to make it a companion of his who, in the height of his pride, said, "Ero similis Altissimo," I will be like unto the Most High.

But concerning the unredeemableness of the devils, I much rather

approve another reason which the forementioned authors, the schoolmen, give of it. “Diabolus,” say they, “peccavit in termino; homo, in via:” *i. e.* The devil sinned being at his journey’s end; man sinned (only) by the way. The meaning is, that the devil sinned in an estate of perfect blessedness, under a full fruition of God, in which respect his sin was provoking in the highest. Whereas man, when he sinned, was but in his progress towards such a condition, and was not as yet possessed of it; and in

this respect sinned, though at a very high rate of provocation, his sin simply considered, yet at a far lower rate than the devil, because against a far lower light, and less grace received. But of this enough, if not more than enough, our main business being no more interested in it than we formerly intimated it to be. Nor did the difficulty laid in our way exact of us any thing more than only to prove that it had been no act of grace in God to provide for the salvation of the devil, which, I suppose, hath been

done with measure heaped up. Therefore,

5, and lastly, To the plea made for a liberty in God to show and to deny mercy, as and to whom he pleaseth, I answer yet further, that in case it be found a thing utterly and clearly inconsistent with the wisdom of God, or with the goodness and graciousness of his nature, having provided means of salvation as sufficient and proper for the salvation of all as of a few, (which our adversaries neither do, nor with any face of reason can deny,) to limit himself in

the consignment or designment of them to the salvation of a few, with a disserviceabling of them as to all the rest, then hath he no liberty to confine or limit himself after any such manner, nor to evacuate the usefulness or beneficialness of these means in respect of the generality of men. This consequence hath been sufficiently argued and proved already, and however, is of itself lightsome enough to make every denier, yea, or questioner of it ashamed. Therefore I assume, for

God to limit himself in the consignment of those, means of salvation unto a few, which he hath provided with a sufficiency and aptness for the salvation of all, or to disintend the salvation of the greatest part of men by them, is a thing clearly and utterly inconsistent with the wisdom of God and graciousness of his nature. Therefore he hath no liberty in the case specified to straiten himself within the narrow bounds of such a consignment as that mentioned. In this argument we suppose, and

take for granted, that the death of Christ is a means as sufficient for the salvation of all men, and as proper and meet for the salvation of all, as of a few. And in this, I presume, we have no adversary; or, however, the generality of those who are adversaries in the main of the controversy depending, accord with us therein. The reason of the assumption, in the argument now propounded, is, as to the former part of it, because it is notoriously repugnant to the principles of sound wisdom to make waste of

any thing which is serviceable or useful for any honourable or worthy end and purpose: and the more precious and difficult of procurement a means is, the more honourable and excellent the end or purpose is for which it is appropriately and peculiarly serviceable, the more repugnant it is to all principles of wisdom to sacrifice it upon the service of vanity, and to do nothing with it at all. Now, questionless, the death of Jesus Christ is a means most choice and precious; not another of like

preciousness, efficacy, or worth, to be procured or levied by God himself: the end for which this death of Christ is most appropriately serviceable, is the salvation of the whole world, which is an end most honourable and worthy. Therefore it must needs be notoriously inconsistent with the wisdom of God to dispose of this means only in order to the procurement and effecting of an end far less honourable, as, namely, the salvation of a few, the obtaining whereof the excellent worth and weight

of the said means doth incomparably over-ponderate and transcend: so that a non-disposal of it towards the obtaining of the just and adequate end for which it is appropriately useful and serviceable, is to evacuate and make useless, though not in whole, yet in part, the supertranscendent excellency, worth, and virtue thereof. But of this lately.

The reason of the latter part of the said assumption, is, because it is every whit as repugnant to

the nature of grace,
goodness and
bountifulness of
disposition, not to relieve
the miserable, who are
every ways capable of relief,
and this with honour to
him that shall relieve them,
when a man hath
abundantly in his hand
wherewith to relieve them,
especially when withal he
hath no other end or use
whereunto to dispose what
he hath in this kind but
only towards the relief of
such persons. And as the
apostle John argueth and
demandeth concerning
men, “Whosoever hath this

within the narrow circle or sphere of the elect or some few particulars. Nor, indeed, can he, with any congruity of expression, be called *ψλάνθρωπος*, a lover of men, or of mankind, in case he loveth some few particular men only; as he is no where in Scripture called GREEK, a lover of angels, although he loves a very considerable number of this kind of creature, as viz. all his elect or holy angels, because he loveth not all particulars. But of this more largely in the premises, Chap, 16, pages 533, 534. To the point in

whom our adversaries suppose to be only blessed by it in this kind. 3. That it would be no ways dishonourable unto God, nor of any harder consistence with his justice, wisdom, hatred of sin, or with any other of his attributes whatsoever, to intend the salvation of any others, or of all men, by the death of Christ, than it is to intend the salvation of those few whom our adversaries grant to be the objects of his intentions in this kind. 4. That the generality of men, or those whose salvation our

adversaries suppose not to be intended by God in or by the death of Christ, are every whit as miserable, and stand altogether in as much need of salvation, as those whose salvation they suppose to have been intended thereby. By the light of these grounds laid together, it plainly appears that it is a thing signally inconsistent with the grace, goodness, mercy, bounty of the Divine Nature or Being to consign the death of Christ to the salvation only of a few, and to suffer the far greatest part of men, (being in every respect as

a polluted sanctuary, and which hath been in this very chapter, and formerly, Chap, 4., pages 122,124, razed to the ground, and not so much as one stone thereof left upon another that hath not been thrown down.

Sixthly, That Christ died for all men, without exception of any, I demonstrate further by the light of this argument: “That doctrine whose tenor, frame, and import axe of a direct and clear tendency to promote and advance godliness amongst men, is, unquestionless,

evangelical and the truth:
But such, is the tenor,
frame, and import of that
doctrine which teacheth
that Christ died for all men
without exception:
Therefore, questionless,
this doctrine is evangelical,
and none other hut the
truth.” The major
proposition in this
argument needeth no more
proof than the sun needs a
candle whereby to be seen
when he shineth in his
might. Yet, if a proof be
required, the premises in
this discourse will afford it
liberally, Chap. 11. and. 12.,
where we opened that

signal character or description of the gospel delivered by the apostle, Tit. 1:1, where he calls it *Ἀλήθεια ἡ κατ' ὑσίσβιναν*, “the truth according to godliness;” meaning, a body or system of truth, calculated and framed with the most exquisite proportion, efficacy, and aptness that can be imagined, for the promotion, propagation, and advancement of godliness in the world, as we formerly interpreted. So that what particular doctrine soever is found to be of the same tendency,

must of necessity be a member of the same body, a branch of the same truth, or, however, clearly and fairly comporting with it, and so a truth. For there is nothing accordable with truth but truth.

The truth of the minor proposition, also, hath been set before the reader in a clear and perfect light, in the procedure of this discourse, where we evinced, above contradiction, that the doctrine of our adversaries, asserting only a limited redemption by Christ leaveth no hope at all, or at

whom there is salvation in him; as he commandeth no man to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles. Nay, his constant manner and method of teaching, charging, admonishing, and treating with men in other like cases imports that, in case there were no salvation for men in Christ, he would be so far from admonishing or charging them to believe on him, that he would take them off, and dissuade them from believing or depending on him in that kind. For, if we search the Scriptures, we shall still

depended upon his presence with those hundred thousand men of valour, which they had hired with a great sum of money out of Israel to assist them, against the Edomites, and he was fully purposed not to be present with them or to prosper them in battle, he gave knowledge unto Amaziah and those with him accordingly, and by an express from himself, by the hand of a prophet, advised him to discharge this army, which accordingly he did and prospered, 2 Chron. 25:6,7.

accordingly ready and willing to give it unto them. Therefore if the doctrine of our adversaries be orthodox, which teacheth that Christ died not for all men, but for the elect only, certain it is that none but the elect are enjoined by God to believe on him for salvation; and consequently no other person who believeth not on him transgresseth any commandment of God in this his non-believing, and so cannot be liable unto any condemnation at all thereby, much less to the condemnation of hell. This

for proof of the major proposition in the argument last proposed.

The tenor of the minor was this: But there are many that will be found liable to condemnation, yea, that will be actually condemned, for unbelief. This proposition hath, I conceive, such pregnant affinity with the express and unavoidable letter of the Scripture, that the mention of a place or two, speaking to the point, will be proof in abundance. “He that believeth on him, is not condemned ; but he that believeth not,” (viz. in

condemnation passeth
from the mouth of the
Judge upon him: according
to the ancient saying,

**"The self-same day
wherein he sinneth,
The person guilty, himself
condemneth"**

Yea, the Scripture itself, the
better to set forth the
greatness and great danger
of the sin of unbelief,
speaketh of it much after
the same manner. "It was
necessary," say Paul and
Barnabas with great
boldness unto the Jews,

“that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing ye put it from you, GREEK i.e. and judge, (or, adjudge, *decernitis*,) “yourselves unworthy of eternal life,” *i. e.* saith Beza, by this your own fact pass sentence, as it were, and give judgment against yourselves, “lo, we turn to the Gentiles,” Acts 13:46. Their rejecting or non-believing in Christ, revealed by the ministry of the gospel unto them, is interpreted by the Holy Ghost as a sentence of condemnation pronounced

unto condemnation. “He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son,” 1 John 5:10. This proposition, then, being unquestionable, viz. that unbelief, and that by way of demerit, as well (if not rather) as any other sin, and not by the mere pleasure or appointment of God only, rendereth men justly obnoxious unto condemnation, the argument of the last proposal stands impregnable against all assaults; and therefore

Christ died for all men without exception, and not for the elect only.

The truth of this conclusion I evince by this demonstration also : “If Christ died not for all men, but for the elect only, then did God put the world, (I mean, the generality of mankind,) into a far better and more desirable state and condition, in the first Adam and under the law of works, than he hath done in the second Adam, or under the law of grace: But this is not so : the world was not at first put by God into a better condition in the first

Adam, or under the law of works, than it is in the second Adam, and under the law of grace: Ergo.”

In this argument, I do not apprehend what, according to the principles of our adversaries themselves, can reasonably be denied. The consequence in the proposition opposeth none of these principles; for doubtless none of them gainsayeth any of these propositions, either, 1. that it is a better and more desirable condition to be in a capacity or under a possibility of being saved, than to be in an utter

innocency remained with him; and that the condition of men in general is much better under the second covenant, the covenant of grace, than it was under the first, the law, or covenant of works. Nor is it at any hand worthy belief, that God should put the world into a better estate, or posture of well-being in the first man, who “was from the earth, earthy,” than in the second man, who “is the Lord from heaven;” especially considering that it is the constant method of the Almighty in his works and dispensations to begin with

that which is less perfect, to proceed unto that which is more, and to conclude with that which is most perfect of all. “First the blade,” saith our Saviour, “and then the ear, and after that,” in the last place, “the full com in the ear,” Mark 4:28. And the apostle tells us, in another case, that “when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part,” or imperfect, “shall be done away,” 1 Cor. 13:10. So that, it seems, that which is perfect is still hindmost in the retinue of God’s proceedings, as Rachel and her children

were in Jacob's march when he went to meet his brother Esau, Gen. 33:2. Thus "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, in these last days hath spoken unto us by his Son," Heb. 1:1, 2. But the path we now speak of hath been so much occupied and beaten with the feet of the providence of the most wise God, that it is visible enough to all the world. As to the particular in hand, viz. that the grace of God abounds to the world much more in the latter, the new

covenant, which he hath struck with it in Jesus Christ, than it did in the former covenant made with it in Adam, appears, as in general by those glorious things that are every where spoken of the latter covenant, above any thing so much as intimated concerning the former, so more particularly from that consideration which the apostle suggests unto us in this passage: “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift; for the judgment was by one unto condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences

unto justification,” Rom. v. 16. Whereas he saith that “the judgment was by one” (*i. e.* by reason of or upon the commission of one sin only, as appears from the antithesis in the latter clause, “but the free gift is of many offences,) unto condemnation,” he plainly informeth us, that the first covenant made with the world in the first Adam was so narrow, peremptory, and strict, that in case any person of mankind should at any time, and though but once, have tripped or stepped aside from any thing commanded therein,

possibility of salvation, yet this capacity was so narrow, weak, or remote, that there was little hope, or probability, that any man would be saved by the means or advantage thereof, which accordingly, as we know, came to pass. Now is it not better for a family, or other community of men, to have good assurance that some of their members shall have great matters of honour and estate bestowed upon them, though all the rest were made incapable of such privileges, than to be at an uncertainty whether

any one of them shall be preferred in this kind or no? To this I answer,

1. It is at no hand to be granted, that the whole species, or generality of mankind, were in Adam invested only with a narrow, faint, remote capacity of salvation or of happiness. For, 1. They were created in an actual possession of happiness, and with the light of God's countenance shining brightly upon them, They were all made "upright," or righteous, Eccles. 7:29, and "in the image of God," Gen. 1:27, and so could not be

“curse ?” Matt. 26:70, 72, 74. By these and many like experiments that may be added, it sufficiently, I presume, appears that the miscarriage of all men in Adam is no sufficient argument of any deficiency in the foundation of their standing and remaining happy in him. Yea, 3, and lastly for this, They stood upon as good terms in Adam for the continuance of that happiness, in the fruition whereof they were created, and consequently for escaping death and misery, as men ordinarily wish or desire for the

possession of that rich and happy inheritance, which was vested in them by the law of their creation. Therefore,

2. The comparison of the family or community specified in the objection is altogether irrelative to the case in hand; and besides, it demands that, as reasonable to be granted, which is nothing less. For it is not better for the generality of a family or greater community of men, that some few of the members, either of the one or the other, should have the greatest assurance that

every of the said members, or inhabitants, should be put into a hopeful and ready way, by their regular industry and honest demeanour of themselves, to thrive, and lift up their heads, and live like men ; although in the meantime they might, either through voluntary and supine carelessness and sloth, or through some vile practices otherwise, deprive themselves of such happiness. That cannot be better for the generality of any community of men, which induceth an absolute necessity of extreme misery

men; because otherwise the world or generality of mankind, should have been better and more graciously dealt with, and provided for by God in the first Adam, than in the second.

The same doctrine I confirm yet further by the seal and warrant of this argument: If Christ died not for all men without exception, then no man whatsoever, in his unregenerate estate, stands bound to believe in him, or to depend on him, at least with any certainty of faith or hope for salvation: But there are many men who,

I mean without a sufficient ground in reason for the doing it, is an act irregular, sinful, and displeasing unto God. “That the soul be without knowledge,” saith Solomon, “it is not good: and he that hasteth with his feet, sinneth,” Prov. 19:2. The former clause was rendered somewhat more plainly in our former translation, thus: “Without knowledge the mind is not good i. e. though a man in what he doth, means or intends never so well, yet unless he knows or apprehends a sufficient reason or ground for what

Solomon, “The simple believeth *every* word,” Prov. 14:15; or, as our former translation read it, “The foolish will believe every thing,” *i. e.* as well that, for which there is good reason why it should be true, as that for which there is none, which is a lash, loose, and unsavoury kind of faith, and such as God relisheth not, regardeth not, no not when the object of it, or the thing believed, is a truth. For “God,” as the wise man informeth us, “delighteth not in fools,” Eccles. 5:4. So that if there be no sufficient

ground in reason, why any unregenerate person should believe or depend on Christ for salvation with certainty of faith, most certain it is that he stands not bound in duty hereunto. Now if Christ died only for the elect, and no unregenerate person certainly knoweth, or can know, that he is one of the elect, it is a clear case that he can have no sufficient ground in reason to believe or depend upon him upon such terms. That no unregenerate man certainly knoweth, or can know, that he is one of the elect, hath

for salvation it is upon the ground lately evinced, above all contradiction, *viz.*, that there is salvation in him for them, and, consequently, purchased by him for them by his death. For he hath salvation for no man upon any other account, John 12:24. So that this objection rather strengthened than weakened the doctrine we maintain.

The minor proposition in the argument last advanced by us, which only affirmed, as to the exigency of our cause, that many unregenerate persons

adversaries themselves require.

Therefore, we pass on to another argument.

“If God intended not the death of Christ for all men, and that in order to their salvation, then have not all men a sufficiency of means vouchsafed unto them whereby to be saved. But all men have a sufficiency of means in this kind vouchsafed unto them: Ergo:” The consequence in the former proposition is pregnant without proof. For it is greater than contradiction, that they who have no propitiatory

sacrifice offered up for them, nor atonement made for their sins, have no sufficiency of means for salvation. So that if God intended no such oblation, no such atonement for any man or number of men, most certain it is that such men are in no capacity of salvation; and, consequently, can have no sufficiency of means whereby to be saved.

The truth of the minor proposition, which avoucheth a sufficiency of means vouchsafed by God unto all men whereby to be saved, might be evidenced

far more distinctly, and with greater severity in the new covenant, the covenant of grace, than he did in the first covenant, which was a covenant of works. The reason hereof is, because in, or under the covenant of works, men were invested by God with sufficient means for the performance of that covenant, and so for the obtaining of the great reward promised or covenanted therein, which was no less than eternal life, though possibly, not a life so rich in blessedness as that covenanted with men in the covenant of grace.

evidence and truth. To pretend that God dealeth more graciously and bountifully with his elect in the covenant of grace, than he did in the covenant of works but not with the generality of men, is but a slim evasion, and supposeth, either that the covenant of grace is not made with the generality of men, (which is a notorious untruth, and hath been detected accordingly once and again already) or that this covenant is not made upon the same terms and conditions, with all those interested or included in it;

which is a conceit of no whit better an accord, either with reason or truth. Secondly, If all men have not a sufficiency of means granted unto them by God, then God dealeth with the generality, or far greatest part of men, more rigorously and with less mercy, and this under the covenant of grace, than he doth with the devils themselves. The reason is plain; because, in case men have not a sufficiency of means whereby to be saved, they have only means given them whereby to increase their condemnation; yea,

above the demerit of their first sin.

Thirdly, If God doth not vouchsafe sufficient means unto all men, whereby to repent, believe, and so to be saved, then will he condemn and destroy (or at least increase the condemnation and destruction of) far the greatest part of men, for that which is no sin, (I mean impenitency and unbelief.) For, 1. I suppose that it is no sin at all in the creature, not to perform or do any such act, which is proper only for God himself to do, or which requires the

lighting down of his omnipotent arm to effect it.

2. I suppose (that which hath been both lately and formerly proved) that God doth and will condemn and destroy men for impenitency and unbelief. So then if to repent and to believe, be such acts or works in the soul which cannot be produced, raised or performed by men by means of that strength, or those abilities which are vouchsafed unto them, but absolutely require the omnipotent power of God to effect them, it is no ways more sinful in the creature

greatest disadvantages for believing, in case it be supposed and known that that cause which worketh or produceth faith in men, as viz. the power of God, by which faith is always produced in men, when they do believe, should always work or act necessitatingly or irresistibly in the production of it. Possibly the grace of God, by which men under signal disadvantages are, according to our adversaries' principles, necessitated to believe, may be just matter of

unto him, that God by his omnipotency, should be able to work faith in whom he pleaseth; or that man should not act and do more than he hath power to do, yea, or than all the creatures in heaven or in earth can enable him to do, I mean, believe.

Fifthly, If they who believe not have no sufficiency of power vouchsafed by God to believe, then is the faith of those who do believe no reasonable or just matter of reproof or shame unto those who believe not: But the Scripture often puts

those who believe not to rebuke and shame, by mentioning unto them the examples of those who do believe: Ergo. This latter proposition needs no other proof but only the sight and consideration of these and such like passages. “For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him,” Matt. 21:32. “The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall

godhead, to GREEK, i.e. to the intent they should be without excuse,” Rom. 1:20, as our former translators rendered, meaning, in case they should neglect the “glorifying of God” by depending upon him, serving, and obeying him. Our last translation maketh no difference as to our purpose, rendering the words thus: “so that they are without excuse for if they, the heathen, be “without excuse,” by the means vouchsafed unto them by God, whereby to glorify him, certainly it was

his intent to render or make them so by the said means. So again: “Now we know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world,” viz. of ungodly persons, “may become guilty before God,” Rom. 3:19; or subject to the judgment of God, as our former translation rendered the original GREEK, i, e. found guilty upon such terms that the judgment of God in their condemnation may appear every ways equitable and justifiable. I omit other

parable, “speechless,” Matt. 22:12. Doubtless, if he could with truth, or with the consent of his conscience, have made such an answer as this, that he had not wherewithal, or that he wanted means, to procure a wedding garment, he would have pleaded it, yea, would have been excused by the king upon such a plea: whereas now he must be “bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness.” So in the parable of the talents, if the “unprofitable servant” could have given this account unto his master

respect of some lesser or lighter, whether omissions or commissions, but in respect of that great and capital sin also, unbelief, yea, mainly and chiefly in respect of this. Now, men cannot appear before God inexcusable upon the account of their infidelity or unbelief, unless it be supposed that they had been sufficiently furnished by him with means, abilities, and opportunities for believing.

At this turn our adversaries are wont to take sanctuary under Adam's wing; but this is too

narrow to cover them. All men, they say, received sufficient power in Adam to believe, and upon this account God may justly hold them inexcusable if they do not believe. This plea is like a commodity fetched from a far country, which turns to no account when it is brought home.

For,

1. There hath nothing yet been brought upon any stage, where I have been spectator, that acted the part of a rational or probable proof that all men were in Adam invested with a power of believing. There

procure, raise, or effect it: for, doubtless, this omnipotency was not given unto Adam; and that which in one case or at one time cannot be effected without a concurrence of omnipotency, neither can it be effected without the same at another.

1.2. Neither is a power to believe whatsoever God shall reveal, a power of believing savingly or to justification, according to the principles of our adversaries, who generally term such a believing (I mean, a believing of what God hath revealed in the

gospel) an historical faith, and make it specifically distinct from that faith which justifieth, defining this to be a recumbency, resting, or relying upon Christ for justification. Therefore, however, men did not receive any power in Adam to believe upon such terms or with such a kind of faith which now God requireth of them to their justification. And to say or prove that Adam, or all men in Adam, received power to believe with any other kind of faith than that which now, in the lapsed state of man, justifieth, is

improbability of the first magnitude,) doubtless, all men now are invested with a power of believing it upon such terms, viz. in case it shall be revealed unto them so that they shall certainly know that the revelation cometh from God. For though the apostle John speaketh of unbelievers under the gospel as men that “make God a liar,” in that “they believe not the record that he hath given of his Son,” 1 John 5:10, yet his meaning is not to charge them with offering this indignity unto God knowingly, wittingly, and,

received no other power of believing, in him, whilst he stood, than what they generally receive by or from Christ since Adam's fall. So that to fetch the inexcusableness of men in the sin of their unbelief, from Adam, is to travel to the Indies, with extreme hazard and expense, to bring the same commodity from thence which a man hath, and this every ways as well conditioned, and in sufficient quantity for his purpose, at his own home.

1.4. If all men received power in Adam to believe savingly, or to justification,

carry along with him into his lapsed condition, that in this he might be enabled by it to believe accordingly. But that it was not useful to him in the former consideration is evident, because during his estate of innocency he remained under a covenant of works, in which case he neither had any necessity of believing in order to his justification, having not yet sinned; or if any necessity in this kind had been upon him, his believing could not have justified him, inasmuch as the law of justification by faith was

a sufficient capacity, by means of that light of reason, judgment, and understanding that shineth in them, to judge and conclude what is agreeable to the wisdom or grace of God, without warrant and direction from the Scriptures. To decline both these is, being interpreted, to profess will and obstinacy under the name of judgment. The former, I am certain, they cannot do ; if they do the latter, they sin against the first-born of those principles which they chiefly employ in the defence and maintenance

insisted upon to evict him guilty, or worthy of condemnation.) As for all that the apostles spake in their preaching the gospel, and what other ministers thereof speak in theirs, so far as they preach the truth of the gospel, or that which being neglected will render men liable unto judgment, is constructively, and in effect, but the same word with that which Christ taught and spake in the flesh. In like manner the apostle Paul, speaking of himself, and his fellow-apostles, and all ministers of the gospel,

Ergo. The consequence in the major proposition the apostle makes unquestionable, where he saith, “He that cometh unto God, must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of those that seek him,” Heb. 11:6. By “coming unto God,” it is clear, by the whole carriage of the context round about, that he meaneth a coming unto him with acceptation, and so as *εὐαριστήσαι*, to please him. And Calvin himself, all along his commentaries upon the place, taketh it for granted that the apostle speaketh of such a faith, or

believing, quæ gratiam
apud Deum conciliet,
which procureth grace and
favour with God.

The minor proposition is
the sense of learned men
generally, especially of such
who have acquainted
themselves with the
writings of philosophers,
and other studious and
learned men amongst the
heathen. In these writings
they find many sayings,
wherein the authors do not
only avouch the certainty
and unquestionableness of
the being of God, but that
very property also, the
belief whereof the apostle

here principally requireth to give a man access with acceptation unto God, viz. his being “ a rewarder of those who seek him.” And besides the apostle himself expressly affirms, that $\tau\acute{o}$ $\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\tau\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\tau\omicron\upsilon$ Ἄεοῦ , *i. e.* that which is knowable of God, (or, as Calvin interprets it, “Quod de Deo cognosci operse-pretium est,” *i. e.* that which is worth a while to be known of God,) was $\psi\alpha\nu\epsilon\rho\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ ι $\alpha\acute{\iota}\tau\omicron\iota\varsigma$, manifest in them, or to them; yea, and further, that God himself “made it” thus “manifest.” Rom. 1:19. A little after, he chargeth

them thus, that “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations,” &c. Rom. 1:21, assigning this for the ground and cause of that most severe and dreadful proceeding of God in judgment against them, in delivering them up to “a reprobate mind, to vile affections, to uncleanness,” &c. Now, questionless, 1, This “glorifying of God as God,” imports, amongst other things, a believing, trusting, depending on him, as “a rewarder of

such high indignation in his breast against them, which should bum so near to the bottom of hell as that specified. “The servant,” saith our Saviour, “that knew not his Lord’s will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes,” Luke 12:48. Yea, doubtless, had not this servant been in a capacity of knowing “his lord’s will,” in case he had been duly inquisitive after it, he had not been “beaten with” any “stripes” at all, though he had committed such things which had been “worthy of stripes” in other

men. This is evident from that great principle of equity attested by our Saviour in the words immediately following, "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required," ("of him," *i. e.* of him only,) and consequently not of others, to whom little hath been given. And if we shall go along with the said principle whither it will directly lead us, we shall be brought by it to this conclusion, that unto whomsoever nothing is given, of him nothing will be required; as in the

clearly and intelligibly emblazoned, that there was no one could pretend ignorance of the knowledge of so sovereign a Lord, who had in so ample a manner exalted his magnificence, viz. That in all parts of the world, in heaven and in earth, he hath written, and even engraven, the glory of his might, goodness, wisdom, and eternity. Saint Paul therefore saith very true, that the Lord, never left himself without witness, even towards them unto whom he hath not sent any knowledge of his word. Forasmuch as all the

certain people,” &c. To this so large and lightsome an acknowledgment of sufficient means vouchsafed by God unto the heathen, whereby to come to the knowledge of him, of his goodness, power, &c., and consequently to repent, and believe in him, I shall not need to subjoin such sayings as these, “That the knowledge of God is naturally inbred” or implanted “in the minds of men;” “that this knowledge is stifled or corrupted, partly by their foolishness, partly by their malice;” with other passages of like

they are of no use neither to those to whom they are given nor to him that giveth them, nor to any others; which, upon consideration of particulars, would plainly appear to be the case before us.

To say that in such affectionate exhortations and expressions as those under present consideration, God only expresseth his will of approbation, signifying that righteousness, and repentance after sin, and so the peace and salvation of his creature, upon and by means of these, are things

simply agreeable to his nature, mind, and goodness, but doth not intend to signify any will or purpose in himself to work repentance in the persons to whom he thus speaketh, nor yet that they have power to repent without him, is an allegation as inconsiderable, and inconsistent with reason, as the former. For,

1. If righteousness, and repentance after sin, and the salvation of the creature hereupon, be simply agreeable to his nature, mind, and goodness, then why should

not the repentance, and, upon this, the salvation, of those persons to whom he particularly addresseth himself in those gracious and earnest compellations and exhortations of which we now speak, be every whit as agreeable to his nature, mind, and goodness as the repentance or salvation of any other persons in their case? He no where signifieth any difference in this kind. Or, if the repentance and salvation of some sinners be agreeable to his nature, mind, and goodness, and not of others, it is a plain

done upon them.

3, and lastly, The argument propounded by us, and with whose vindication we are yet in labour, doth neither suppose that God will work repentance, as our adversaries call “working repentance,” in the persons there spoken of, *i. e.* that he will work it upon any such terms that it shall necessarily or infallibly be effected, nor yet that the persons themselves can repent without God. That which it supposeth is this, that God is so far moving and assisting the hearts, wills,

3, That supports their wills, thus framed, to and in the production of the act itself of repentance. Whereas that which men themselves do, in, towards, or about their repentance, is so inconsiderable in comparison of what God doth, that the greatness of his grace and interposure herein, deserves, in a manner, all the praise and honour that belongs unto the action: although it be true also that the person himself who repenteth, or in whom repentance is wrought, must of necessity be so far, or to such a

or argument to support it. For, God intending to save no man but by the death of Christ, evident it is, that if, there be any man or number of men for whose salvation he did not intend this death, that he never intended their salvation. Therefore I assume: "But there are no such men or number of men whose salvation God never intended, or whom he intended to leave irrecoverably to everlasting perdition. Ergo." The reason of this proposition is, partly because whatsoever God at any time

estate and condition with him. So, then, all men considered as being in God, were nothing but God himself, according to the common and most true maxim of divines: "Quicquid in Deo est, est Deus;" whatsoever is in God, is God. The truth of this maxim was clearly evinced by us. Chap. 4. of this discourse, where we argued the absolute simplicity of the Divine Essence, or God. Therefore, if God purposed from eternity to leave any man or number of men irrecoverably to eternal

highly magnify the constant love, care, and respects of God towards the righteous: “The righteous Lord,” saith David, “loveth righteousness, and his countenance doth behold the upright,” Psa. 11:7. And again: “For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield,” Psa. 5:12. So again:

“The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,” Psa. 34:15; (to omit many other places of like assertion.) From whence it evidently appears, 1, That God beholds and sees, and

God which respects
unrighteous men, and
whereby wrath and
judgment are decreed
against them. That
disposition or principle
which we now ascribe unto
God is most clearly
asserted in the Scriptures
by himself, and that by way
of vindication of his
righteousness from the
unworthy conceits of those
who judged otherwise of
him: “ If a man *be just*, and
do that which is lawful and
right; and hath not eaten
upon the mountains,
neither hath lifted up his
eyes to the idols of the

house of Israel,” &c., “he is just; he shall surely live, saith the Lord God,” Ezek. 18:5, 6, 9: *q. d.* During this posture, or course of righteous walking, he is under the blessing of that gracious and unchangeable decree of mine, wherein life and peace are decreed unto righteous men. “But when the righteous *turneth* away from his righteousness, and *committeth* iniquity, and *doeth* according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his

palpable absurdities, (that I say not intolerable blasphemies also,) that my hope is it will shortly, mole mali sui ruere, fall and sink with the insupportable weight of its own evil in the minds and judgments of men. As for those places of Scripture, with the arguments commonly drawn from them, which are counted the pillars of such a reprobation, we shall in due time, the inflexible hand of death, or some other grand diversion, not preventing us, by the gracious assistance of the Spirit of

Adam extended unto all men, without exception, in a way of condemnation. Therefore I assume: “But the sin of Adam is not extensive unto more in a way of condemnation, than the grace given by Christ is in a way of justification. Ergo.”

This latter proposition is clearly enough asserted by the apostle, and this over and over: “But not as the offence, so also is the free gift,” (*i. e.* the free gift of grace by Christ unto the world;) meaning that the offence or sin of Adam did not operate so forcibly, or

God, and the gift of Jesus Christ thereby, should be much more effectual to procure the justification and salvation of many, than the offence of one the condemnation of many; partly, because the offence of one wrought only in its own strength and native tendency in bringing condemnation and death upon many, having only the permissive will of God, not his operative or designing will, for or towards the production of such an effect; whereas the operative and projecting, or designing, will of God,

than that the sin of Adam should condemn many, yet for matter of fact it is otherwise; and that the grace of God by Christ justifies a few only in comparison, whereas the sin of Adam condemns all without exception. To affirm, for the strengthening of the faith of believers, (upon which account, questionless, the apostle here speaketh it,) that there is a far greater probability that many should be justified by Christ than that many should be condemned by Adam, and yet to affirm

withal that, this probability notwithstanding, many, yea, all without exception, are condemned by Adam, and but a very few, comparatively, justified by Christ, is to blow hot and cold with the same breath, and to pull down with the one hand what a man builds up with the other.

The commensurableness or coextensiveness of the grace of God in Christ, in order to the justification of men, with the sin of Adam in respect of the condemnation of men, is very pregnantly avouched, the second and third time

hath made greater, nor to assert a signal disproportion between two numbers which God hath computed and drawn up to a perfect equality.

How uncouth and broadly incongruous and irrational their interpretations are, who carry the sense of these passages another way, and make the *all men* of Christ no men at all, in comparison of the *all men* of Adam, and the *many* of Christ few, in comparison of the *many* of Adam, hath been demonstratively argued in the sixth chapter of this Discourse, where

likewise the expositions of Mr. Calvin, Bucer, and other orthodox expositors upon the said places, were produced in full accord with the sense and interpretations now awarded by us.

Only one thing we shall briefly add in this place. Whereas the apostle, in the latter of the two last recited passages, expresseth the guilt contracted by men from Adam, in a verb signifying the time past, *αμαρτωλοί κατεστάησαν*, *have been* made sinners and the righteousness or justification brought unto

men by Christ, in a verb of the future tense, *δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται*, *shall be made righteous*, which to some may seem to import, that the apostle intends to make the justified ones of Christ in this place, no more than those who *shall be* actually justified and saved in the end, the number of which cannot be equal to those made sinners by Adam; I answer, 1. That the justification accruing unto the world by Christ, is a little before expressed in a verb signifying the time past also, viz. where he saith, as

enforcing any such supposition as this, that the justified ones of Christ, spoken of in this chapter, are only those who shall be saved at last, that it enforceth the quite contrary, as hath been shown. And for the sentence, it requireth no such supposal upon any account whatsoever. But 4, and lastly, The reason, I conceive, why the apostle varieth his expression about the justification brought unto the world by Christ, mentioning it, in the latter place, in a verb of the future tense, whereas he

and shall be delivered from the guilt of sin and liableness unto death, “by the obedience of one, *i. e.* by the obedient and submissive deportment of Jesus Christ towards his Father, in yielding of himself up unto death. In what sense men may be, and are by the apostle said to be, “by nature children of wrath,” Eph. 2:3, and yet not liable unto condemnation, either in their respective conceptions or births, shall, God assisting, be argued and cleared in more convenient place. Only at

present, to stay stomachs,
we say, 1. That the word
“nature” doth nowhere
signify either the natural
conception or the natural
birth, nor always, if
anywhere, partnership or
communion in the human
nature, or a descent from
Adam in the ordinary way
of propagation, but
sometimes an innate or
inbred principle in a man,
one or more, as 1 Cor. 11:14,
Rom. 2:14, &c.: sometimes
also a course or series of
actions whereunto a man
falleth and addicteth
himself of his own accord,
without any compulsion or

interpreted the word *φύση*, “by nature,” prorsus, *i. e.* utterly, or altogether. Theophylact and (Ecumenius, *γνησίως*, vere, seu germane, *i. e.* truly, or indeed. 4. Chrysostom’s interpretation of the place is of much affinity with that first mentioned. The apostle, saith he, “saith, we have provoked God, and made him wroth, that is, we were wrath, and nothing else. For as he that is the child of a man, is by nature a man, even so we also were children of wrath even as others; that is, none was free, but we all did things

deserving wrath.” 5, and lastly, By “children of wrath,” the apostle may very probably mean persons that had been lost, and were worthy wrath, or deserving death. And thus Calvin interprets. “By children of wrath,” saith he “understand simply such as were lost, and worthy of eternal death.” According to the import of this interpretation of the phrase, “children of wrath,” all men may truly be said to be “by nature,” *i. e.* by natural propagation, or by their descent from Adam, “children of wrath,” and yet

account, worthy of eternal death by reason of that communion they had in Adam's sin, being in his loins when he sinned; and yet this worthiness may not be imputed unto them, or charged upon them, being, as we suppose it clear from the Scriptures, expiated or atoned by the great sacrifice of Christ in his death. This interpretation of the apostle's saying, "We were by nature children of wrath even as others," is, I conceive, of all the rest, least liable to any material exception. But we have gone beyond the line of our

late intentions in following this chase: we retire, with a purpose to conclude this chapter, with the addition only of one argument more for the confirmation of our main doctrine. Therefore,

In the thirteenth and last place, The universality of redemption purchased by Christ I further argue and demonstrate from the consideration of some of the principal types under the law, by which the compass and unlimited extent of it were prefigured. I shall insist only upon two: the brazen serpent, and the feast of jubilee.

First, concerning the brazen serpent: Our Saviour himself owneth and asserteth a typical correspondency in the erection and usefulness hereof with himself in respect of that great and gracious design and purpose of God in sending him into the world: “And as Moses,” saith he, “lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” John 3:14, 15. A type being a kind of similitude, and the

property or condition of this not being, in the proverbial expression, “to run on all-fours,” *i. e.* to answer or hold proportion in all particulars, indeed, many times not in more than one only, therefore our Saviour, to prevent all misunderstanding in the interpretation or application of the type mentioned, particulariseth that very respect or consideration in himself, and his sending into the world, which was prefigured and expressed in the type alleged by him, in these words, “That

whosoever believeth in him should not perish, &c,” To understand clearly what there was in the type answering, in a way prefiguration, that consideration in Christ’s coming or sending into the world, which himself here insists upon as presignified hereby, we must have recourse to the history concerning the erection of the brazen serpent, unto which also himself sendeth us in that particle of comparison or resemblance, “as;” “As Moses lifted up,” &c. The original of this brazen

serpent, together with the counsel and intention of God in his erection, Moses recordeth thus: “Make thee,” saith he to Moses, “a fiery serpent,” viz. in similitude or form, “and set it upon a pole ; and it shall come to pass that *every one that is bitten*, when he looketh upon it, shall live,” Num. 21:8; from which words it is most evident, that this “ fiery serpent” (in form as Christ came “ in the similitude of ” that “ sinful flesh,” whose sting is so mortal to the world) was not intended by God as a means of healing or

serpent,” might be healed thereby. Now, all men without exception being, as we all know and confess, stung, and that mortally, with the “fiery serpent” sin, unless Christ should be lifted up, upon the cross, *i.e.* suffer death, with an intent on God’s part, 1. That every man, if he pleased, might believe in him; and, 2. That every man that should believe in him should be saved by him; he should altogether disanswer that famous type we speak of, and that in that very consideration and respect wherein he pleads a

performed, gives no being to it, must of necessity have a being there, where or from whence it is to be had upon the performance of this condition, whether this condition be performed or no. If it be true, that in case I shall go up into the chamber, I shall meet my friend or brother there, it must needs be true that my friend or brother is there, whether I go up to meet him there or no. In like manner, if this be a truth, that in case I shall believe on Christ, I shall find salvation for myself in him, it must of necessity be

the intent of this feast was not, I suppose, to compel, or necessitate every man, no, nor yet any man, to return either to his possession, or to his family, whether they would or no, but to afford them an opportunity, and to invest them with a liberty, or right of returning unto either, if they pleased. Because otherwise, it had been less matter of gratification, ease, or indulgence unto men, yea, possibly unto some, as viz. unto those, who had been found unwilling to return unto either, it had been matter

of trouble and discontent,
nsv γάρ ἀναγκάϊον νραγμ*
ἀνιαρόν ἴφν, (as the Greek
epigram hath it) *i. e.*

**Whatever necessity
imposeth,
The mind necessitated
troubleth.**

But to the point in hand.
It being the clear and
unquestionable intent of
God, in and by the great
and solemn feast of jubilee,
to loose the two sore yokes
of bondage and poverty
from off all necks
whatsoever, without any

difference or distinction of persons, in one kind or other, he should be far more gracious and munificent in type or shadow, than in substance, in case he should not be every whit as large, free, and comprehensive in his intentions of affording means and opportunity unto men for deliverance from sin and death by Jesus Christ.

If it be objected; It is true, the intent of the jubilee was to invest every man (viz. that was a Jew, and of the natural seed of Abraham) with a right of power to

return to his possession or family; but not to gratify every man simply, or to indulge the like privilege unto all the world. Therefore this rather proves the confinement of the intentions of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, unto his church or elect only, than the enlargement of them unto all the world; especially considering that the whole body of the people and nation of the Jews, were typical, and presignified the church or churches, which were afterwards to be raised up amongst the Gentiles. To

this I answer,

1. Be it granted, that the body or nation of the Jews did typify the church or churches of the Gentiles, yet did not every single person of this nation typify a true member of these churches.

As, for example, Ahitophel did not typify a true saint, or a believer under the gospel, nor did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram typify so many godly or holy men among the Gentiles; nor had any unrighteous or wicked person of this nation the honour of typing out any true Nathaniel, or

whosoever from amongst the most idolatrous and heathenish nation under heaven shall believe, may and ought to have communion with them in such their possessions and enjoyments. Either of these answers is sufficient to loosen the joints of the loins of the objection.

The arguments and grounds laid down and managed in this chapter, together with those passages and texts of Scripture which we have heard speaking so distinctly and aloud the same things with them, have turned my

CHAPTER 19.

Wherein the sense of antiquity, together with the variableness of judgment in modern writers, touching the controversy under discussion, is truly and impartially represented.

FOR their sakes who are afraid to believe any thing, what pregnancy of ground soever there be to evince the truth of it otherwise, but only what they know, or at least think, that many other men, and these

amongst the fathers, though not in time, yet in worth and name; and from him proceed first unto those that lived before him, by a gradual ascent; and then to those that succeeded him, by a descent answerable. That Austin's doctrine concerning the intentions of God about the extent of the death of Christ, was the same with that asserted by us for orthodox and sound in our present discourse, needeth, I suppose, no greater proof than an impartial and due consideration of these and

such like sayings, scattered up and down in his writings from place to place upon occasion. In that discourse wherein he makes answer, *ad articulos sibi falso impositos*, to certain articles falsely fathered upon him, he insisteth upon this, in the first place, as laid to his charge, that he should hold, “That our Lord Jesus Christ did not suffer for the redemption of all men.” The second he mentioneth is this: “That God should not be willing to save all men, though all men were willing to be saved.” In purging himself

upon the former of these, he writeth thus: “ Against the wound of original sin, wherewith in Adam the nature of all men was corrupted and become dead, and from whence the disease of all manner of concupiscence groweth, the death of the Son of God our Lord Jesus Christ is a true, potent, and the singular remedy, who being not liable to the debt of death, and the only person without sin, died for those that were sinners and debtors” in this kind. “Therefore as to the greatness and potency of

the price, and as far as concerns one” and the same “cause of mankind, the blood of Christ is the *redemption of the whole world*. But they who pass through this world without the faith of Christ, and the sacrament” or sacred work “of regeneration, are strangers to” or estranged from “this redemption. Therefore, whereas by reason of one and the same “nature of all men and, by” one and the same “cause of all men truly undertaken by our Lord, all men may truly be said to be redeemed, yet all men are not” actually

that the book, or tract, wherein it standeth is supposititious, and not Augustin's. But besides the genius, phrase, and style, every ways *ὁμοιάζοντα*, resembling the author, whose name it beareth, Calvin, who of the two was a man of greater discerning abilities, acknowledgeth it accordingly. Nor is there any piece in all those writings, which pass under the name of Augustin's works at this day, but may, upon a pretence every whit as plausible, be traduced as illegitimate.

Before I pass from this

testimony, I desire the reader to take knowledge that the worthy author thereof, towards the beginning of the said tract, and a few lines before the recited testimony, professeth, that what he should deliver therein, was his sense and judgment in the respective articles, in opposition to the Pelagians and their doctrine. From whence it manifestly appeareth, that in Augustin's days, it was no orthodox doctrine, but a Pelagian error, to hold that Christ died not for all men; inasmuch as the father

complaineth (as we heard before) that he was falsely charged by some abettors of the Pelagian faction that he held, that Christ the Lord suffered not for the redemption of all men. Therefore they who traduce the doctrine maintained in this discourse, under the odious name of Pelagianism, either declare themselves notably ignorant of what Pelagianism meaneth, or else asperse that father, who, questionless, knew better than all his fellows what belonged to Pelagianism, with the blot

of this ignorance. By his vote and verdict, the doctrine which contradicteth that asserted by us, is Pelagianism.

Another testimony from the same father, upon the same account, may be that formerly cited. Having rehearsed these words, “For God sent not his Son to judge the world, but that the world through him should be saved he infers thus: “Therefore as much as lieth in the physician, he came to heal the sick. That man slayeth himself, who will not observe the precepts of the physician.

of our Saviour, as the apostle Peter saith,” &c. In a fifth, “If therefore the price of our life be the blood of the Lord, see then how it is not the earthly uncertainty of a field that was redeemed therewith, *but the eternal safety of the whole world.*” In a sixth, “God in no” other “way provided more beneficially” or bountifully “for mankind, than when the very wisdom of God, that is, his only Son, consubstantial and co-eternal with the Father, attempted to assume whole man.” In a seventh, “What

adjudged to eternal punishments.” Such sayings as this, are of perfect accord with the doctrine asserted by us, Chap. 17, of this discourse, where we acknowledged and proved at large, that notwithstanding the redemption purchased by Christ for all men, yet no man dying in impenitency and unbelief shall be saved. Now if Augustin were of this judgment, that Christ died for all men, there is little question to be made, but that this opinion or doctrine reigned generally in the Christian church in

his days (and so had done before him) as orthodox and catholic; considering that he was, as the ablest, so the strictest and closest defender of that faith, which was more generally esteemed orthodox, and professed, taught, and held throughout the Christian world. Nevertheless let us hear other learned, pious, and orthodox writers delivering their sense about the said point, in their own words.

Ambrose, with whose ministry and eloquence Augustin was much affected, asserted the same

that therefore the sun is not risen upon, or unto all, because such a man depriveth himself of his heat. But as for what concerneth the sun, he keeps his prerogative: but this man acteth the part of an unwise man in shutting out” from himself “the favour of the common light.” And a little before he had said: “The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord, because forgiveness of sins is granted” or given “unto *all men, i. e.* offered as a gift unto all. In another place thus: “The brazen serpent was (in a figure) as

them with his blood, and assumed them” or, their nature, “and exalted them, being assumed? There is a plain reason to be given; for they believed not, and grieved,” or, exasperated, “the Holy Spirit,” &c. A little after, speaking of John Baptist, of whom it is said that “he came to be a witness to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe; he subjoineth, “He is not presently in fault, if many refused to believe; for the will of him that came, was that *all men should believe and be saved.*” Once more,

effect demonstrate the weakness of the thing; which God forbid that we should believe concerning him who is omnipotent.”

He that remains yet unsatisfied whether this father held general redemption or no, may, if he please to seek, find more ballast for his thoughts in this kind, in what he hath written upon chap, 43 and chap. 45 of the prophecy of Ezekiel. I confess, that when he speaks of the application or actual enjoyment of the redemption purchased by Christ, he then limiteth it

them.” Again, commenting upon chap. 2:9, of the same epistle, and having rehearsed these words of the apostle, “That he through the grace of God should taste death for every man,” “not,” saith he, “for believers only, *but for the whole world*: for he died for all men. For what though all do not believe? He hath fully done that which was proper for him to do.” Much to the same purpose in another place: “Although Christ did not gain all men, yet he died for all men,” so “fulfilling that which belonged unto him.”

Elsewhere, comparing the lamb offered in the Levitical sacrifices, with Christ the Lamb of God; concerning the former he saith, that “it never took away any one man’s sin so much as once; whereas the latter” taketh away “the sin of all the world and that “when it was in danger of perishing, it presently delivered it from the wrath of God.” To reserve many other testimonies offered by this author in the case in hand, to another occasion, in case it he offered, upon Rom. 4:25, he hath these words : “That thou mayst

demonstration of his godhead by” his “works, it remained that he should offer up a sacrifice *for all*, delivering up his temple unto death for all men, that so he might discharge and free *all men* from that old transgression.” Elsewhere: “With the blood of his passion,” or, mactation, “he simply redeemed all men.” In another place: “There was need of death, and it was requisite that death should be endured for all, that what was due from all might be satisfied. Wherefore the Word, for that it could not die, for it

presence, “of the Saviour in the flesh, was the solution of death, and the safety” or, salvation “of every creature.” If the reader desires to know more of the mind of this author, touching the point in question, he may please to peruse his learned tract, entitled, “De Incarnatione Verbi Dei,” wherein he hath frequent occasion to declare his judgment therein.

Hilarius, another orthodox father, who lived not long after the former, writeth upon Matthew to this effect: “He,” Christ,

“admonished them to learn what this meaneth, ‘I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,’ viz. that the law bound up,” or consisting only, “in the observation of sacrifices, could afford no help” unto men, “but that safety,” or salvation, “was reserved *fur all men whatsoever* in the indulgence of mercy.” And presently after, speaking of Christ: “He came unto,” or for, “ALL MEN: how then doth he say that he came not to,” or for, “the righteous?” His answer is, that there were none such, but all were sinners.

Elsewhere he discourseth thus : “ The Son of God was born of a virgin for the sake of mankind, and the Holy Ghost himself assisting him in this operation, and overshadowing with his power, (being the power of God,) he planted the beginnings of a body for himself, that, being made man of a virgin, he might receive that nature of flesh in” or upon “ himself, and that by the fellowship of this conjunction the whole body of mankind might be sanctified; that as *all men were hid*” or built “*in him*, by means of his willingness

judged the extent of the penalty of it to consist only in the dissolution of the body by death, as if the punishment of hell fire came in upon the account of the gospel, in case it should be rejected, (which is the judgment of some amongst us,) I shall not dispute, nor undertake to determine, but pass on to bear the sense of other learned, orthodox, and pious fathers, much about the same time with the former.

Cyril of Jerusalem, much about the same times, delivereth his sense about

appears from the former sentence and the scope of the place, that the whole world might be saved by him. In another place the same author saith, "Heaven and earth are full of his glory, the ends of the world are full of his goodness, full of his praise, the *whole nature of man* is full of his condescension," &c. A little after, speaking of Christ: "He," saith he, "that is the offerer is the same that is offered up *for the world*." And not long after: "Let Adam rejoyce, saying unto Christ, by Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant

with sayings of like import.

Arnobius, another Christian writer about the same times, of good account, bringeth in the heathen arguing and demanding of Christians thus : “If the Saviour of mankind become, as you Christians affirm, why doth he not, by the same bounty, deliver all men ? He doth not deliver all alike, who calleth all alike. He doth not keep back or reject any person from his sovereign grace,” or, indulgence, “who affords the same power unto high, low, servants, women, children,

of coming unto him.” To this, this author answereth: “The fountain of life is open *for all men*, nor is any man denied the right” or, power “of drinking, nor driven away” from it. “If your pride” or, disdain “be such, that you reject the benefit of the gift offered, nay, if your wisdom be so great as to call those things which are offered by Christ, pastime and toys, how doth he offend who inviteth you” notwithstanding “who hath only this to do, viz. to expose the fruit” or, blessing “of his bounty to the arbitrement” or, free

choice “of that right” or, power of choosing “which is given you ?”

Didymus, another author of note in this century, and who was Jerome’s tutor, in his third book concerning the Holy Ghost, writeth to this purpose: “Wherefore the Father, even for their salvation not sparing his own Son, delivered him up unto death that by the death of his Son, he being destroyed who had the power of death, that is, the devil, he might *redeem all those* that were held in the bands of captivity by him.” Not long after, speaking of

him, who hath bestowed such and so great a benefit upon mankind, that he hath not spared his own Son, but hath delivered him up *for all men.*" More testimonies from this author are at hand, if need be.

Gregory Nyssen, brother to the last-named father, stands by his brother in the pre-asserted doctrine, saying, that "as the beginning of death being first" only "in one, passed through the whole nature of man: in like manner the beginning of the resurrection, by means of

one, extendeth itself unto the *whole nature* of man.” More plainly in another place: “He” (speaking of Christ) “sanctifieth unto God and the Father not only the first born of men, but even the *whole tribe*” or generation “of mankind, by means of the first-fruits of our lump being in him, that is, by means of that flesh which he took of us, enlivened with a rational” or, intellectual soul, “whereby he did, as it were, leaven the *whole mass*” or, concretion “of the essence” or, substance “of mankind with holiness.”

himself “*all men*” In another place he saith, “There is no matter of wonder like unto that of my salvation: a few drops of blood refashioning the *whole world*, and, like that which causeth the coagulation of milk, knitting and gathering us together in one *with all men*.”

Elsewhere, in his Christian Poems, he speaketh to this effect:

From one we all proceed,
we all one breath
Breathe out; to one we all

incline;
God unto all alike, his
birth, his death,
His resurrection, and
heaven, doth consign.

Epiphanius, a little before the two last-named Gregories, writing against heresies, asserteth the doctrine we contend for, as orthodox. “First,” saith he, speaking of Christ, “He offered himself that he might discharge the sacrificing of the Old Testament, presenting” unto God “a more perfect living” sacrifice “for all the

world.” Afterwards: “How vain” and bootless “is all the understanding that accompanieth heresy? for they” heretics “even deny their own Lord, that bought them with his own blood.”

Tertullian, who lived in the age next before the last-mentioned authors, though in some other points he declined the judgment of his orthodox predecessors, yet, in the doctrine under inquiry, he was one spirit with them. “What,” saith he, speaking of the wood by the casting of which into the water, the prophet Elisha caused the

offering, “ in,” or through, “all things for us all.”

Origen, about the same time, held forth the same doctrine in the world, affirming that “our Lord and Saviour, being led as a lamb unto the slaughter, and offered up as a sacrifice of” or, upon “the altar, procured remission of sins *for the universal world, &c.* A little after : “So then the world is trained up, first to seek remission of sins by divers sacrifices, until it should come to a perfect sacrifice, a complete and absolute sacrifice, a lamb, of a year old, perfect, which

should take away the sins of the *whole world*,” &c. Elsewhere he maketh the apostle Paul to have said, that “Christ had given himself for the redemption of *whole mankind*, that he might redeem those that were kept in bondage by sins, *by tasting death* without deceit, *for all men*.” I present the reader only with a little from these authors respectively, in comparison of what upon the same account might be transcribed from them.

Cyprian, a worthy author and martyr of this age, counted it no injury to the

tempered,” or qualified
“the sentence of his justice,
removing that hereditary
burthen from the
posterity,” or children,
“and mercifully purging out
the leaven of original
corruption by the washing”
of baptism “and anointing.
But indignation and wrath
deservedly returns hack
upon them, who, after the
grace of this indulgence”
from God, in the
forgiveness of their sins,
“Voluntarily go astray and
wander by sinning, abusing
their own freedom, being
led, not by necessity, but by
will; nor doth there remain

for them any benefit,” or any thing gotten, “in the death of Christ, but the benefits” hereof “being despised by them, do most justly condemn them.” This passage is pregnant with the assertion of both the main doctrines vindicated in the, present discourse, as viz., 1. That Christ hath died as well for those that shall he condemned and perish as for those that shall be saved, and, consequently, for all men. 2. That those also may be condemned and perish, who had sometimes obtained remission of sins

by Christ.

That further may be taken into consideration, by occasion of the former part of this quotation, that it was the judgment and sense of the ancient fathers and Christians generally, (I know none to be excepted,) that in baptism there was always a particular application made to the person baptized of the general redemption purchased by Christ, so that he that was baptized, if an infant, received thereby exemption and deliverance from the guilt of original sin derived from Adam: if a

person of mature years, not only this, but forgiveness also of all his actual sins committed formerly: For which opinion, though I do not as yet see any demonstrative ground, either in the Scriptures or in reason, and, God sparing me life to finish the second part of this work, I shall in one particular declare my sense in opposition to it; yet the opinion, I confess, so far taketh with me, partly for the proofs' sake which are produced, with some probability, for it; partly for the signal learning, gifts, sharpness of

effect said, exposing their precious souls to a certain loss of salvation by Christ, in case they die before they come to years of discretion. Certainly it is no point of Christianity to lay such wagers as these upon the truth of any opinion which hath such a cloud of enemies and opposers of it, as all the ancient fathers, without exception, as far as yet I understand, and together with these (for we cannot reasonably imagine the contrary) all the Christian churches in the primitive times, with all the knowledge, parts, zeal, and

that is good: nor is he backward,” or indisposed hereunto, “through voluptuousness, inasmuch as for our sakes he assumed flesh exposed to sufferings; or else he doth take *care of all*; which indeed becometh him that is made Lord of all: for he is a *Saviour, not of some, and not of others*,” &c. In an oration to the Gentiles he calls unto them thus: “Hear ye that are afar off, and hearken ye that are near: the word is not hid” or concealed “from any: the light” thereof “is common, it *shineth unto all men*,” &c.

Justin Martyr, whose writings, amongst those that treat of Christian religion, and are judged authentic, and not spurious, are the most ancient that I know since the days of the apostles, giveth frequent testimony to the truth of the same doctrine.

In one place he presenteth the saints “as knowing” or acknowledging “that he that hath wrought that great salvation *for mankind*, is praiseworthy, greatly to be feared, and the Maker” or Creator “of heaven and earth.” In

“mankind,” or the “kind of men,” he cannot mean a few, a circumscribed number, a small parcel of men, as the elect, so called, are known to be: these in no propriety of speech can be called *ro ἄνθρώπων γένος*, “the generation” or “kind of men or, if in one place he should have meant “the elect” by such an expression, it is no ways like but that in some other, he would have expressed himself more plainly. But what he means by *rt γένος ro των ανθρωπων*, “that genus or “general kind of men,” appears evidently

enough by this descriptive character which he gives of it, ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀάμ ὑποθάνατον Ἰτηττώκι, i. e. “which from Adam,” or through Adam, “was fallen under death.” This, we know, is the adequate and appropriate character, not of some men, but of all mankind without exception. But the sun is visible enough without a candle.

Ireneus, not long after the former, avouched the doctrine of our contest over and over. “As Eve,” saith he, “becoming disobedient, became” hereby “the cause

of death both to herself and to the universe of mankind; so Mary, having the man predestinated” by God, meaning Christ, “notwithstanding” her being involved in the death brought upon all mankind by Eve, yet, “ becoming an obedient virgin, she proved the cause” or means “of salvation *unto the universe of men.*” His meaning is, that by submitting unto the pleasure of God, signified unto her by the angel, concerning the bearing and bringing forth of his Son Jesus Christ in the flesh, she had the grace

why Paul saith that “we are reconciled through the body of his flesh,” viz. “because his righteous” or just “flesh reconciled *that flesh which was detained in sin*, and brought it into favour” or friendship “with God.” Now, that flesh which was detained in sin, was not the flesh only of the predestinate or elect, but of all mankind without exception.

These are the principal fathers and writers of the primitive times, and before Augustin, that are now extant or known: and all these with one mouth (as

we have heard) and with a “nemine contradicente” give testimony to the truth of that great doctrine, which hath been avouched in this discourse, viz., that the redemption purchased by the death of Christ, was for all men, considered as men respectively, and not for the elect only or those that shall actually partake of it, and be saved.

The writers of best note and repute, since Austin (until these later times of reformation) and from whose writings the best and steadiest informations are to be had, what doctrines or

sense “he may also be said to have been crucified only for those, who receive benefit by his death,” *i. e.* that his crucifying was, in the consequent intentions of God, intended only for such. “For the evangelist saith, that Jesus was to die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that he might gather the sons of God dispersed into one, &c. He gave his blood for the world, and the world would not be redeemed, because the darkness received not the light.” These last words plainly interpret his meaning in those, wherein

participating in the saving grace of redemption purchased by Christ.

Cyril of Alexandria (about the same time with Prosper) filleth his writings with the same truth. “They,” saith he, speaking of the Jews, “unjustly desire his death, wickedly lie in wait for him ; unmercifully slay him, thrust him out of their land and city, who is the life, the light, the salvation of *all men*.” Elsewhere: “ Since it became” him “to suffer that corruption, sin and death, which man brought in” to the world “ being by this

commenting the fifth chapter to the Romans, he maketh the words of the apostle equipollent to these: “The munificence of grace overcometh the decree of justice. For when man sinned, the whole kind” or race “is punished. But now when *all men* behave themselves impiously and unjustly, he doth not inflict punishment” upon them “but granteth life” unto them. Afterwards in the progress of his exposition upon the same chapter, he presents the apostle speaking thus to his

Romans: “doubt not of the things I speak with relation unto Adam. For if these tilings be true, as they are, and that when he sinned, his whole race received a decree” or sentence “of death, evident it is, that the righteousness of” our “Saviour procureth *life for all men.*”

Leo, commonly styled the Great, very frequently bewrayeth his judgment to stand to the same point. Comparing the death of the Lord Christ with the deaths of other holy men, he saith, that “there were but single” or particular “deaths in

unto him, ‘Thou hast a devil,’ and offered him all other indignities, even to his passion itself; so did Moses likewise,” &c. If Christ came to redeem those who charged him with having a devil, with casting out devils through Beelzebub, and who maliciously prosecuted him with all manner of injuries and evil-entreaties, and this unto death, doubtless he came not to redeem the elect only, or such who in conclusion repent, believe, and are saved: for some of these, and particularly those that said he had an

unclean spirit, were charged by him with that sin which he saith shall not be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come. Matt. 12:82, compared with Mark 3:28—30. The same author elsewhere saith, that “Christ, as much as lay in him, *died for all men*, however his death profiteth none but only those who are willing to believe in him.” And yet again: “The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is” or are “the God of all men, and therefore desireth that *all that he hath made should he*

saved.” A little after, “The blood of Christ hath verily been shed *for all men*, benefiteth them that helieve.”

Gregory, surnamed the Great, about the year 570, counted it neither heresy nor error to teach the same doctrine. “The Father then,” saith he, “being just, and punishing him who was just,” meaning Christ, “disposeth all things justly: because upon this account *he justifieth all*,” or all things, “because he condemneth him for sinners who was without sin.” Elsewhere he termeth

Christ “*The Redeemer of mankind;*” and in another place expressly saith that “Christ *redeemed all men* by his cross; but, yet that it remaineth, that he that endeavours to be redeemed,” *i. e. to enjoy the redemption purchased for him by Christ, “and to reign with God, be crucified.”*

Bede, somewhat above a hundred years after Gregory, propagated the same doctrine in the world for truth. “Joseph,” saith he, “in the Egyptian language, signifieth Saviour of the world. This is manifest in Christ, since

under the figure of Joseph, he is declared to be the Saviour, not of the one only land of Egypt, but also of the *whole world*.” And soon after, “But in our Joseph,” meaning Christ, “the *whole world* deserved to receive increase.”

Theophylact, who lived more than two hundred years after him, viz. about the year 930, (as some of our best chronologers calculate the time of his mortality,) is a sufficient witness that the same doctrine was alive in the church in his time. “He verily,” saith he, speaking

of Christ, “died *for all men*: and canst not thou endure to pray for them?” Elsewhere we have words to this effect from his pen: “As by the offence” or fell “of one, the curse came upon all men, (that which before he called judgment,” or condemnation, “he now calleth an offence, that is, the sin of Adam,) even so by the righteousness of one, Christ, grace is come unto *all men*, giving unto *them* both *justification* instead of sin, *and life* instead of death.” In another place he saith, that “the apostle showed how that all men

whatsoever *needs* fear a *repulse*, since he desireth not the death of a sinner, but that he should live.” In another place he saith, that “Christ is become a means of safety, and this not of any inferior kind, hut of that which is eternal; and this not to a few, but *to all*.” And again, that “God the mediator, which God hath placed between himself and men, underwent death for all men, that he might redeem all men from death.”

Bernard, somewhat after the year 1100, followed the tract of the same doctrine.

able to inform me, which have had occasion to take cognizance thereof, or of that which is contrary to it. The first general council after the apostle's days, was that assembled at Nice, about the year. 325, by the authority of Constantine the Great, in the twentieth year of his reign; a council that hath always been of sovereign esteem in all Christian churches. This council, in that symbol of faith, or creed, composed by the members of it, make this profession, or confession of their faith, in the point we speak of, “ We

Christ, the Son of God, was made man, and suffered for me,” in case he did not suffer for him, which, say our adversaries, the event of his non-salvation will evince, in that profession of his, he must needs be found to have been a liar. Therefore, without controversy, the sense of the Nicene fathers, in the mentioned passage of their creed, was, that Christ became man, and suffered death for all men without exception. Now this Niceno creed, (as is well known to those that are a little versed in ecclesiastical history)

redemption reacheth, “nor ever separated from the mass of perdition.” The same author addeth further, that soon after this Moguntine Synod, there followed a council of the church of Rhemes, and of many other bishops in France, whereof Hincmarus, a learned man in these times, was president; this council, he saith, approved the judgment of the former, touching their censure of Goteschalcus. Yea, he proceedeth, and saith yet further, that the church of Lyons, although in many

things it rather inclined to Goteschalcus than to the two late-mentioned synods, yet in the particular in hand it approved the sentence of the said synods. In a large transcription which he exhibiteth from the acts of this last synod, he citeth words to this effect: “How then when they are baptized in the death of Christ, and are washed from their sins in *his blood*, is that true renovation and true purgation wrought, if they yet remain in the mass of damnation and perdition concrete, and not severed?” He speaketh, as appears all

along the discourse, of such persons who finally apostatise and perish. Therefore the clear sense of this council also was, that those who are washed from their sins in the blood of Christ, and consequently who were redeemed by him, may notwithstanding perish. The same doctrine, as the same author reporteth, was approved and further established by another synod held at Valentia, in France, consisting of the bishops or ministers of the fore-mentioned church of Lyons, and of two other

of Dort. For to a man of an erect judgment, and whose spirit hath more of God and of a man in it than to suffer itself to be yoked with prejudice or base partiality, reading and weighing some passages in the records of this synod, it cannot lightly but be a matter of some difficulty, and which will cost him some of his thoughts to resolve himself clearly what the resolutions of this synod were touching the extent of the gracious intentions of God in, or about the redemption purchased by Christ, at least in case these

impenitents and unbelievers of contempt or neglect, at least, in their non-performance of the condition." Questionless if men be duly and sufficiently convinced, or be in capacity of this conviction, that negligence is, or was, the only reason or cause why such or such a thing is not, or was not performed by them, it must be supposed that such men have, or had, sufficient strength or means to have performed it. For if men certainly know that they have not, or had not, a sufficiency of means or

strength for the performance of a thing, it is impossible that they should ever be convinced that only negligence was the cause of their non-performance of it. The reason is, because a knowledge or persuasion that the performance of a thing is impossible, in respect of a man's weakness, or want of strength to perform it, is a certain cause of his non-attempting it, and consequently of his non-performing it. So that negligence in this case cannot be the only cause of his non-performance; nay,

the truth is, that negligence is no cause hereof at all. Suppose a man doth neglect to try or to use means that he may fly like a bird in the air, yet this neglect of his cannot reasonably be looked upon as any cause of his not flying; but his inability to fly, in conjunction with a certain knowledge of such an inability in him, and of the invincibleness hereof, is the adequate and sole cause of his not flying.

The same synod elsewhere by other of its members expresseth itself thus, using the distinction

conjunction with the entire body,) asserteth this position, that “there is a certain common philanthropy” or love of men “in God towards all mankind being fallen, and he *seriously witteth*,” or hath willed, “*the salvation of all men.*” Afterwards, speaking of the condemnation of those who believe not, he saith: “This event is not of itself intended by God, but follows by accident upon the default of man.” Afterwards: “If this redemption be not supposed as *a common*

benefit bestowed on mankind, that general and promiscuous preaching of the gospel committed unto the apostles to be performed among all nations, will” be found to “have no true foundation.” And again: “How shall any necessity lie upon me to believe that such a benefit belongs unto me, which, though sufficient for me, yet was never truly intended for me?” Soon after he saith: “This redemption is the payment of a due” and valuable “price for us captives, not that we should come out of

more alike loudly dissonant from those former sayings. That notion of theirs which they oft repeat is; amongst many others, of very sad resentment viz. that, “though some men be willing, or should be willing, to believe, or to partake of redemption by Christ, yet God is not willing they should;” whereas the Scripture saith expressly, that “if there be first a willing mind, a man is accepted according to that which he hath, not according to that which he hath not ” 2 Cor. 8:12; that is, when a man is truly

willing to do that which God requireth of him, hut wanteth either strength, means, or opportunity for the doing of it, and upon this account only doth it not, God doth not reject him, or punish him for not doing the thing, hut regards and rewards him for the uprightness of his heart, and the preparedness and readiness of his will to do it, in case means and opportunities were vouchsafed him. So that, doubtless, if a man be truly willing to be redeemed or saved by Christ, no want of strength, means, or

opportunities, in one kind or other, for his salvation, shall hinder him from being saved, because he is in this case accepted (*i. e.* measured and estimated) by God according to the ability vouchsafed unto him, which extended only to the enabling of him to work and bring his heart to a true willingness of being redeemed and saved by Christ, and which he hath with all faithfulness employed and improved accordingly ; and not according to any greater or further abilities, which haply are given unto others,

proportionably, which he should or could have found with him in case, with more power, means, and opportunities, he had gone further, and done more. And besides, that God should not be willing that a man should be redeemed and saved by Christ, when as the man himself is truly willing in this kind, is a saying of a notorious inconsistency with truth, considering that the willingness of any man in this kind must of necessity proceed from a willingness in God semblable to it. For “it is God that worketh” in

establish their own opinion concerning the death of Christ, in opposition to the judgment of those whom they voted heterodox and erroneous, we shall, God willing, show and prove in the latter part of this discourse. In the mean time let us briefly consider what companions and friends we have, even amongst those of the reformed religion and Protestant party of men, in that great article of our faith which we have contended for hitherto, the gracious intentions of God towards all men without exception in the death of

Christ and the redemption purchased thereby.

First, Concerning those whose judgments and consciences rather consoorted with Luther's doctrine than with Calvin's, being upon this account distinguished by the name of Lutherans: these (more generally, and almost universally, at least as far as my inspection into their writings informeth me), teach the doctrine of general redemption by Christ as orthodox and sound. I shall only insist upon a few passages from the writings of two or three

known authors of the Lutheran persuasion, leading men in their way.

Melancthon, Luther's great associate, teacheth, that “ *Every person* of us apart ought to be firmly resolved of this, that we are pardoned and received by God; and that with this special” or particular “faith *every particular man* ought to apply the benefit of Christ to himself.” Elsewhere he saith, that the “counsel of God was, that *mankind* should be redeemed;” and presently after asserteth the “love of God in his Son *towards*

mankind." In another place he affirmeth that "God poured out his wrath against the *sins of mankind,*" not of a few particular men, "upon his Son." A little after, speaking of Christ, he saith, "He feels a greater burden, viz. the wrath of God against the *sins of mankind,* which he knoweth to be poured out upon him. He sorrowed also," and was troubled, "that a great part of mankind would perish through a contempt of this" great "benefit of God" In another place he saith, "It

universal also. But that all men do not obtain the promises of the gospel,” *i. e.* the things here promised, “it ariseth from hence, that all men do not believe.” The writings of this author have in them a large and full eye of that doctrine which hath been protected hitherto.

Chemnitius, another learned champion of the Lutheran faith, riseth up in his might, from place to place, to maintain the same doctrine. “The whole transaction,” saith he, “of the Mediator is considerable in this, whether” God “the Father

saith, 'It is finished;' whereby he testifieth that all those things which were necessary for the expiation of sins, and for redemption from the curse of the law, were fully, sufficiently, and superabundantly consummated and discharged in" or by "his obedience and sufferings." And that he doth not speak; this with particularity of respect to the sins or redemption of a few, or of the elect only, but simply and with reference to the sins and redemption of all men, appears, 1. From the clear drift and purport of

any or all without exception, which, according to the notion of their faith, were sent thither for want of a complete satisfaction made for their sins. 2. Soon after, in progress of the same discourse, he citeth this from the apostle, “Unus pro omnibus mortuus est—one died for *all men*,” 2 Cor. 5:14; and from another apostle this, “Si quis peccaverit,” &c., “If any man sin, we have an Advocate,” &c.; “and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the *whole*

world," 1 John 2:2. 3. There is not the least insinuation in the said passages of any limitation or restriction intended by him to the elect or their sins only. 4, and lastly, The general sense of the latter passages is fairly and fully comportant both with the express tenor of the former, and, indeed, with the judgment of the author in other parts of his writings, where he hath occasion to declare his sense in the point.

Luther himself led them into the way of the same doctrine, though, haply, he

by Christ, viz., by his ignominy, shame, reproach, and death,” &c. If Adam’s fall, wherein all men without exception fell, be recovered or restored by Christ, all that fell thereby must needs be recovered or restored by him. If only the elect, so called, be recovered, this is no recovery of Adam’s fall, but only of a small or less considerable part of it, or rather of some few persons only who fell thereby. The same author in another place saith that Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans, writes, “That God promised

consequently, as
adversaries to the great
doctrine of universal
redemption maintained in
this discourse, whether, I
say, these testimonies and
sayings do not evince above
and beyond all
contradiction, that these
men were not so thorough,
uniform, settled, or
consistent with themselves
in their judgments about
the doctrine of redemption
as men had need be, whose
authority and judgments
are commonly taken for the
standard of other men's
faith, and judged little less
than equal to the

authority with us, that on the one hand, what was worthy, and of God, in them, may turn to a happy account unto us, and bless us ; and on the other hand, that what was weak, and of men, in them, may not ensnare us, or balance the spiritual commodity accruing to us from what was honourable and beneficent in them, with loss and disadvantage.

I begin with Calvin himself, and humbly desire those that oppose his judgment and authority to obstruct the course of the doctrine avouched in this

discourse, lest it should “run and be glorified” as truth ought to be, to consider whether these passages and sayings next ensuing be with it and for it, or against it. “Although,” saith he, “there is nothing to be found in the world worthy the favour of God, yet he showeth himself propitious” or favourable “*unto the whole world*, in that he calls *all men without exception* to believe in Christ, which is nothing else but an entrance into life;” with more to like purpose transcribed Chap. 5. p. 142,

of this discourse. Certainly if God's railing of all men without exception to believe in Christ be a sufficient argument or sign of his propitious and favourable inclination towards them, he must needs really intend the grace or good of salvation unto them ; otherwise his calling of them to believe, as, namely, if it should be accompanied with a purpose or intent in him, either simply to destroy them, or to increase their destruction, would rather argue his hatred than any propitiousness of affection

end of a blessed life standeth in the knowledge of God, that the entrance” or access “unto blessedness might not be shut up against *any man*, God hath not only implanted in the minds of men that which we call the seed of religion, but hath also manifested himself in the whole fabric” or workmanship “of the world after such a manner, and offers himself daily so plainly” or openly unto men “that they cannot open their eyes, but they must needs behold him.” If God provideth that the passage or way unto happiness may

“world,” 2 Cor. 5:19, understood the elect of God only, dispersed up and down the world, he would not in his exposition have used the same word to express them, especially without the help of some other, one or more, of a more plain and known signification in that kind. So that there is not the least question but that he, both in the text mentioned, as likewise in his Commentaries upon it, understood the word “world,” in the ordinary and best known signification of it, *i. e.* for

the generality or universality of men. Upon the same Scripture afterwards he demands, “For what purpose did God appear unto men in Christ?” He answereth and saith, “For reconciliation, that enmities being taken out of the way, *those that were estranged*” from him “might be adopted for sons.” Now they that were estranged from God were not the elect only, but the whole universe of mankind with them. Therefore according to the express import of this piece of commentary, God designed

generally notioned as a man clearest and most resolved in his judgment against it. I shall be more sparing in citations of a like import from others, who pass in common discourse as professed enemies, also, against the same doctrine: but whether they be so indeed, methinks these sayings following, with many more of a like inspiration, that might be added unto them, should put to a demurrer. “ So God loved the world,” &c. “ By world,” saith Musculus, “ he understands universal mankind,” &c. In another

alone, but for his enemies also: *not for some men only, but for all men*. This is the immense latitude” or compass “of the love of God.” I know not how a man can express his sense for universal redemption, though he should abound in it never so much, in words more significant and distinct. These passages, with many others like unto them, have been formerly cited from this author.

Peter Martyr hath these sayings: “His will was,” speaking of God, “that it should be well *with all men*, and that one only

this Scripture, “God will have all men to be saved,” to prove that God is not the author of sin in the world, and upon this account argueth thus: “If God will have men saved, then he useth good means, and doth not stir them up to sin: for sin brings men to destruction.” If his sense were, that God willeth only that the elect should be saved, then, notwithstanding this argument, God might be the author of all the sins in the world that are committed by far the greatest part of men, viz. by

support and strengthen their buildings, being, indeed, a principle so necessary that in many cases men can make no tolerable work without it. I may, I suppose, without prejudice or loss in the least to the cause we have undertaken, supersede the multiplication of instances from other authors of the same persuasion and repute with those last named, whereby it would appear as clear as the light at noon-day, that there are few of them, if any, but that now and then do homage with their pen to that great

and sovereign truth of universal atonement by Christ. I shall therefore conclude with some single testimonies from several men, leaving the reader to pursue his satisfaction concerning the rest by his own reading.

Pareus, writing upon that of the apostle, “That he through the grace of God should taste of death for every man,” saith, that “whereas he saith, ‘for every man,’ it respecteth the amplification” or extent “of the death of Christ. *He died not for some few; the efficacy*” or virtue “of it

appertains unto all.
Therefore there is life
prepared in the death of
Christ for *all* afflicted
consciences.”

Gualter, preaching upon
John 3:16, and speaking of
Christ, saith, that “he being
to name those whom God
so loved, doth not mention
Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob,
Moses, David, the
prophets, the Virgin Mary,
the apostles, or holy
martyrs, but *the world,*
which our evangelist
affirmeth to *lie wholly in*
wickedness, and *of which*
Christ himself more than
once affirmeth the *devil to*

upon which account, amongst all our opposers, we found only Piscator and Beza true to their principles, who as well deny that Christ died sufficiently as efficaciously, or intentionally, for all men. But if Christ “merited,” *i. e.* purchased or procured, “by his death, grace, righteousness, life, most sufficiently for all men,” and this so or with such an intent, “that nothing might be wanting in his merit to make those that perish, inexcusable,” doubtless he merited as much for those who perish

Hebrews, willeth us to “observe to whom the fruit” or benefit “of the death of Christ belongeth, and in what the deliverance which the apostle speaks of consists. This deliverance,” saith he, “appertains unto all that were subject unto bondage in this life. Now we were all thus subject; therefore *the deliverance appertains unto all*. The deliverance is said to be general, or appertaining unto all men, because *it appertains unto all*” or whole “mankind, although all do not acknowledge the benefit, nor receive it with a

thankful mind. Thus it comes to pass that the said deliverance comes to be” eventually “efficacious in believers only.”

J. Fox, our countryman, in his Meditations upon the Apocalypse, hath this passage, amongst many others of a concurrent sense and notion: “The Lord Christ then came into the world, being sent by his Father. And wherefore was he sent? That he might repair the losses which *nature*,” he means the nature of man, “had sustained. For the Lord, seeing the miserable and

lost condition of our infirmity, so prone unto evil by an innate frailty, so loved *the world*, that of his own accord he bestowed his only begotten Son” upon it, “who might relieve the frailty” thereof, “change” or turn “death into salvation, pacify the wrath” conceived against it “in heaven,” &c. The condition of the elect, or of believers, was not miserable, or however not the condition of these only. Therefore, this author, in saying that “the Lord so loved the world, that he voluntarily bestowed,” &c., could not, by “the world,”

mean such only, elect, or believers, but the generality of mankind, the condition of all which was equally “lost and miserable,” and who are frequently signified and expressed by the word “world.”

Lavater, preaching with his pen upon the prophet Ezekiel, teacheth the doctrine asserted by us in words to this effect: “Some say, I could willingly die, but that the greatness of my sins maketh me afraid of death. The minds” or consciences of these men “are to be raised with this consolation, that we know

that God hath laid our sins upon Christ, so that he hath made satisfaction upon the cross for us all.” To a person troubled or dismayed with the fear of death through the greatness of his sins, it is a very faint consolation to understand or consider that God hath laid the sins of some few men upon Christ, or that he hath made satisfaction for the elect, or for those that believe, one main ground of his trouble or fear being whether he be of the number either of the one or the other. Therefore,

doubtless, the author's sense in the passage was, that Christ hath made satisfaction upon the cross for all men without exception.

Chamier, as solemnly engaged an adversary against the opinion of general redemption as any, yet so far befriendeth the truth at unawares as to say that "the righteousness of Christ is common for the saving of *all men* unto eternal life."

Mr. Perkins is known to have been very deeply also baptized into the same spirit of opposition to us in

J. Jacobus Grynaesus numbereth him amongst his “orthodoxo-graphers,” (*i. e.* his orthodox and sound writers,) who reasoned thus against the Pelagian heretics, who denied that Christ died for all men: “If it were so, how could the apostle say, that as in Adam all die, so in Christ *all* shall be made alive?” yea, and saith withal, that “the catholic church utterly detests that opinion which denieth that Christ assumed the nature of man for all men, and that he died for all men.”

Dr. John Davenant, an

eminent member of the Synod of Dort, instead of an answer to this argument of his adversaries against justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ: “If the righteousness of Christ, which is the general price of the redemption of all men, he imputed to us, then we may truly be called the redeemers or saviours of the world,” replieth thus : “The righteousness of Christ then is not imputed” for example “unto Peter, as” or as it is “the general *price of redemption for all men*, but as the price wherewith his soul is

“undone” (*i. e.* perish) for ever. For whatsoever men may be brought into “danger” of suffering, doubtless there is a possibility, at least, that they may suffer, as we have reasoned the case further elsewhere, where also we put to rebuke that distinction of a possibility in respect of second causes, and in respect of the first cause or decree of God, evincing from express grounds of Scripture truth in this assertion, That “there is not the least danger of suffering inconvenience by any such

that they never, in other places of their writings, declared themselves against it; but only to show, 1, That the truth of this doctrine is so near at hand; and, 2, That the influence of it is so benign and accommodations unto many other truths and doctrines in Christian religion, that it is a hard matter for those that deal much in these affairs not to assume and assert it ever and anon, and to speak and argue many things upon the account of the authority of it; yea, though “extra casum necessitatis” on the

one hand, and “incogitantias” on the other hand, they are Wont to behold it, as God doth proud men, “afar off.”

Let us draw up the sum total of the chapter, in a very few words, and so end it. First, we have seen the roots of that doctrine held forth in our present discourse, thoroughly watered with the fairest streams of the judgment, learning, approbation, and authority of the primitive times. Secondly, concerning times of a later date, we have found that the judgment and faith of

that party of Protestant churches and writers which is known by the name of Lutheran, do more generally, if not universally, accord with the same doctrine. Thirdly, and lastly, that the other party of these churches and writers, viz. those who incline more to the sense and judgment of Calvin in matters of Christian concernment, together with Calvin himself, doth very frequently attest the same doctrine, yea, and cannot well want the service and assistance of it in the managing and carrying on

CHAPTER 20.

The Conclusion: exhibiting a general proposal, or survey, of matters intended for consideration, explication, and debate, in the second part of this work.

THOUGH Christ the Lord reigneth, whilst his enemies are yet unsubdued, and not put under his feet, yet he reigneth not so like unto himself, nor with that peaceableness or desirableness of

government unto his subjects, as he shall and will reign, at least in the glorious result of his mediation, when all that which in any degree opposeth him in his government shall be wholly taken out of the way, and no enemy left with any strength or power to infest, trouble, or cause the least disquietment or discontent in all his kingdom. In like manner, though the judgment and conscience of a man may reign with much contentment and satisfaction, in the holding and profession of many a

reconciled with that truth which they hold and profess in this kind. Upon this account, having in the precedure of our discourse settled this great doctrine, that “ Christ gave himself a ransom for all men, without exception,” upon such pillars of Scripture, reason, and authority, that no man that shall duly weigh the premises can reasonably question the truth thereof; I judged it necessary, nevertheless, (God not laying my intentions in the dust by the hand of death or otherwise,) to subjoin the

vindication of the said doctrine, from all such objections, exceptions, or encumbrances, wherewith I find it on every side oppugned, and the course of it much obstructed in the minds and judgments of some: that so they who are or shall be persuaded of the truth of it, may sit with so much the more ease in their judgments, and reign in the happy contemplation and enjoyment of so blessed a truth, with so much the more peace and joy.

In our intended vindication of the said

show, how the supposed iron and steel of such grounds, arguments and reasonings, wherewith the said doctrine commonly is assaulted, are “turned into stubble and rotten wood” before it. Thirdly and lastly, We shall give some general and brief answer to such passages and sayings, which are usually alleged and cited from the ancient writers, in way of opposition to this doctrine. Concerning the Scriptures, which are commonly pressed to serve in that warfare we speak of, the truth is, that, as notice hath

been formerly given, there is none of them can be brought to speak any thing at all, no, not in appearance, against the doctrine we plead, but only by the mediation of some deduction or inference raised and drawn from them by the reasons of men. There is no Scripture that hath yet been or indeed can be produced, wherein it is either affirmed, that Christ died only for the elect, only for believers, or the like; or denied, that he died for all men without exception. The particular places which

are commonly managed with greatest confidence in the actors, and with most applause in the spectators, against the said doctrine, are these:

Matt. 20:28. “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Unto which several others of like phrase and expression, are wont to be added, as, viz. Matt. 26:28, Rom. 5:15, 19, Heb. 9:28, &c. From these Scriptures, with their fellows, such an argument as this is levied:

“He that gave his life a

Christ is said to “have loved his church, and to have given himself for it,” &c. From such premises as these, this inference or conclusion is much solicited: “Ergo, Christ gave his life for his sheep,” *i. e.* his elect, “only; gave himself for his church only,” &c.

Matt. 1:21. “Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” This text likewise is wont to be seconded with some others as sembling with it, as Acts 10:43,— “that through his name, whosoever believeth

and religion, and bearing themselves upon the Scriptures also, though in somewhat a more remote way. The most considerable, and those insisted upon with greatest importunity by the adversaries of the said doctrine, are these following. Such of them as I find in the writings of men of worth and name, I shall set down, with their respective authors, or abettors, noted in the margin.

1st *Reason against general redemption.* “If Christ, by his death merited

for us,” *i. e.* for those for whom he died, “the reconciliation itself of our persons with God, and that grace should actually and really be communicated unto us, which if he should not have done, he should not have benefited those that are his to such a degree, as Adam damnified those that are his, then did he not die for all men without exception.” But the antecedent is true: therefore the consequent also. The reason of the consequence in the proposition is, because certain it is, both from the

not impetrate these benefits for all men, (and consequently not die for all men,) because certain it is, that there is not an application of them made unto all men: But the impetration and application of these benefits are never separated the one from the other in their subjects: Ergo.”

5th Reason. “They for whom Christ by his death actually procured and obtained reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and eternal life, are made real

partakers of these benefits: the reason is, because nothing can be said to be procured and obtained by Christ for any man, which at one time or other he doth not partake and enjoy: But unbelievers who perish eternally, never come to be partakers of these benefits, reconciliation with God, forgiveness of sins, &c.: Ergo.”

6th Reason. “They who by the death of Christ are reconciled unto God, are saved by his life. This proposition beareth itself upon the authority of Rom. 5:10. But not all men, but

application of the said satisfaction is suspended. The reason of the latter branch of the consequence is, because if satisfaction was made by Christ upon none other terms for some than it was for all, it clearly follows, that in case there be a possibility of a non-application of it unto some, there is a like possibility unto all: and consequently, a possibility of the non-salvation, or of the damnation of all. The minor stands (it seems) upon this bottom; that those whom God the Father hath given unto Christ to be

compass or extent, then did not Christ die for all men: But all the three particulars mentioned are of one and the same compass, or commensurable: Ergo.” The reason of the consequence is evident: viz., because the saving operation of the Holy Ghost, or effectualness of calling, are not extended unto all men. The minor builds upon this sorites: the Father gives only his elect, whom alone he loves, to be redeemed by his Son: the Son only redeems those that are thus given unto him, as being those whom

alone he loves: the Holy Ghost, being the love of the Father and the Son, sanctifies only the elect of the Father, and the redeemed of the Son.

11th Reason. “If no man wittingly and knowingly payeth a price of redemption for a captive, which he certainly knoweth this miserable man will never be the better for, then Christ died not for all men: But no man wittingly and knowingly payeth such a price upon such terms: Ergo.” The reason of the sequel in the major proposition, is, because

Christ knew certainly that the greatest part of men would never receive any benefit by his death: and upon this account it is altogether irrational to suppose that he died for them.

12th Reason. “If Christ died for all men without exception, then now in heaven he intercedeth for all men without exception: But he intercedeth not for all men: Ergo.” This latter proposition fears no contradiction, and therefore stands by its own strength. The reason of the major seems to be, because

God's intentions and decrees never miscarry, or fall short of their ends : and to affirm this, is absurd, yea, blasphemous: Ergo."

14th Reason. "If Christ by the counsel, intention, and decree of the Father, died for all men, it will follow that there is neither an election of any certain persons, nor a reprobation of any: But there is both an election of some certain persons, and a reprobation of some others : Ergo." The reason of the major (because I find it not expressed) seems to be, because it is contrary to

Ergo." The consequence is supposed authentic without proof. The minor is argued, 1. From the gratuitous election of some. 2. From the like gratuitous vocation of some, as of the Israelites, Deut. 4:7, Psal. 76:1, 147:20. 3. From the covenant made with Abraham, and not with others. 4. From the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles. 5, and lastly, From that special favour, love, and grace, wherewith God prosecuteth his elect.

16th Reason. "If Christ died for all men, and all men be not saved, then is

God not omnipotent: But certain it is, 1. That all men are not saved, and, 2. That God is omnipotent: Ergo.” The minor needs no proof, as to either part of it. The reason of the consequence, in the major, is, because if Christ should die for all men, it would follow that God should be willing that such a benefit should be impetrated or procured for men, which he could not apply unto them.

17th Reason. “If Christ died for all men, and all men come not to be saved, then is the wisdom of God defective or imperfect : But

certain it is, 1. That all men are not saved. 2. That the wisdom of God is not at all defective, but absolutely perfect: Ergo, Christ died not for all men.” The minor here also is presumed, as well it may. The consequence stands upon this supposition, That to fall short in compassing what a man intends, argues a deficiency in point of wisdom.

18th Reason. “If Christ should die, and make satisfaction for all men, and yet all men not be saved, God should be unjust, as viz. in receiving a full

satisfaction for men, and yet refusing to receive them into favour, or to forgive them: But certain it is, 1. That all men are not saved; and, 2. That God is not unjust: Ergo, Christ died not for all men.” *19th Reason.* “If Christ died for all men, and all men come not to be saved, then doth that great love out of which God gave his Son unto men, vanish into an unprofitableness or unusefulness in respect of men: For to what purpose, or of what use is the love of God, in the gift of his Son unto men, if he doth not

withal give them faith in his Son? But certain it is, 1. That all men come not to be saved; and, 2. That the great love of God in the gift of his Son doth not vanish in unprofitableness: Ergo.”

A like argument is framed upon the account of the great love of the Son himself towards those for whom he died. Christ, saith the argument, so loved us, that whilst we were enemies, he died for us. Is it now credible that he should not apply a benefit merited or procured with so much sweat, and with such precious blood, unto

those for whom he merited it ?

These arguments, with some texts of Scripture not here mentioned, cited to prove some particulars, together with some few sayings from the fathers, both which we intend to take and give knowledge of upon occasion, were in a manner the whole strength wherein the Synod of Dort so much magnified themselves against their adversaries, the Remonstrants, in the traverse of the second head of matters controversial between them, which

redemption which is maintained in this book. Nevertheless, because they may possibly be conceived by some, less considerate, to rise up with much strength against it, we shall take them into consideration respectively in their places. I will not say that there have been sufficient grounds laid, yea, and sufficiently proved, in the premises of our present discourse whereon to frame satisfactory answers even to those that are counted pillars amongst them, but shall leave the consideration hereof to the

of the former, I am content that it shall stand as additional unto them. I find it in this form:

20th Reason. “All they for whom Christ died can freely say,

‘Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died for us,’ Rom. 8:34: But they are only believers, and the elect, that can speak thus, ver. 33, not unbelievers, Mark 16:16: Ergo.” The minor is further strengthened by this consideration: The consolation raised from the consideration of the death of Christ, which the apostle

here (Rom. 8:32, 33, &c.) administereth unto the saints, or believers, would have little solidity or worth in it, in case reprobates and unbelievers could as truly say that Christ died for them also.

This argument likewise from the same authors, is virtually contained in that already mentioned in the fifteenth place. Yet let it have the honour of an argument by itself.

21st Reason. “If reconciliation with God, and remission of sins, be obtained for all and every man, none excepted, then

the means of believing.

22nd Reason. The learned Chamier advanceth this argument against us, the strength whereof the observant reader will find lodged in the nineteenth reason already propounded. “To all those for whom Christ truly died, the death of Christ is profitable: But this death of his is not profitable unto all men: Ergo.” The major he proves, 1. From the proper import of the particle, “for,” which, saith he, always notes some benefit accruing to him, for whom any thing is said to be done.

2. From the state of the controversy. 3, and lastly, From the Scriptures, as where it is said, “He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us,” &c. Tit. 2:14. So again from Matt. 26:28, Rom. 5:8, 9. The minor he proveth, 1. From the concession of his adversaries themselves, the papists, concerning infants who die unbaptized; all which they exclude from salvation, and consequently from all benefit by the death of Christ. 2. From the concession almost of all, concerning persons of years of maturity; viz. that

very many of these perish everlastingly, and so never come to receive any benefit by the death of Christ.

23rd Reason. In the same place, the same author subjoineth this argument, the same in substance with the former; “If Christ died for all men, then all men are saved,” or shall be saved: “But this is not so: Ergo.” The minor, which needs no proof, he proves from John in: 36, Rom. 2:8. For the consequence in the major proposition, he cites the apostle’s discourse, Rom. 5:8—10, under the notion of an express

universal grace ; viz. whether God vouchsafeth not unto all men without exception, a sufficiency of power or means whereby to be saved. Within the verge of this debate we shall modestly inquire, whether God doth not vouchsafe unto all men the same, or a like sufficiency, at least in a geometrical proportion, of means, whereby to be saved.

And because, amongst other Scriptures, the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Romans is frequently, and this in very many places and passages of it, brought

put hand to the greater work. But in this, I shall willingly be determined by the advice of friends.

Concerning the testimonies of the fathers usually produced in way of discountenance to the avouched doctrine of this discourse, I judge the transcription of them no ways necessary, until we come to give answers unto them ; and therefore shall not encumber the reader's patience with them here. Unto whom, instead thereof, I shall address myself in this double request: 1. That he will

please so far to comport with his own interest, and mine, as to strive by fervent and frequent prayer, to interest God himself in the composure of the work intended, that through much of his presence with me in the framing and inditing of it, if yet his good pleasure shall be not to judge a proportion of life and health for the finishing of it, too high a dignation for me, all my insufficiency for so great an undertaking may be drowned, so as not to appear in one kind or other, to the loss or disadvantage of any man

presumed to be.

THE END.

**MAY GOD BLESS YOU
MY DEAR READER**

A TABLE OF TEXTS OF
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ILLUSTRATED IN THE
FOREGOING
DISCOURSE.

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Reigns not until objections
he answered 719

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**A TABLE OF SOME
GENERAL RULES FOR THE
INTERPRETATION OF THE
SCRIPTURES**

DELIVERED IN THE
FOREGOING DISCOURSE;
*The Knowledge and
Consideration whereof will
give much Light into the
Controversies there
debated.*

IT is frequent in Scripture
to express a thing after the
manner of an event, or
consequent, which shall or
will follow upon such or
such an occasion or means
some ways likely to

produce it, which yet frequently cometh not to pass: nay, the contrary whereunto many times follows, and comes to pass instead thereof, 300, *Page* 306, 322

Many promises, absolute in form, are yet conditional in matter and meaning, 226, 292, 302, 306, 310, 318, 350, 408 Promises made with respect to special qualifications, are to be understood with such an explication or caution, wherewith threatenings against particular sins are to be interpreted 318

There is nothing more

successful unto them, such attributions are to be understood with these or the like explications or limitations, as much as in him -lieth, as far as is meet or proper for him, &c. *Page 328* There is nothing more ordinary in Scripture than to attribute or predict unto men both future punishments and rewards, in respect of their present ways, whether good or evil, Bimply and without any clause of exception, in case of an afterchange in either ; whereas notwithstanding the possibility of a change is

do or give it, though at present it be neither actually done nor given
291, *Note*.

The determinate signification of a word in one place, is no argument of the same sense or signification of it in another, 152, 160, 172

There is scarce any idiom of speech more frequent in Scripture, than to mention or speak of an act simply and indefinitely» as performed and done, when the doing of it hath been fully resolved, concluded, on consented

To put restrictions upon Scripture phrases, or assertions, without necessity, and this demonstrable either from other Scriptures or unquestionable grounds of reason, is not to interpret the Scriptures now in being, but (upon the matter) to make new

192, 530

The particle, *iVa, that*, doth not always import the certainty of the thing spoken of, by way of event, no, not when speech is of God himself, but ofttimes the intention only of the agent 300,

